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Types of Syrian Women

THE UNCHANGING EAST

VOLUME I.

The Unchanging East

or

Travels and Troubles in the Orient

Including Tunis, Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land

102693

By

Robert Barr

Author of "Tekla," etc.

In Two Volumes

Volume I.

ILLUSTRATED

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The Unchanging East.

CHAPTER I.

The Tarry, Trousers-hitching Seaport of Manchester — Delights of the Ship Canal — The Sad Fate of the Birmingham Man — The Peaceful and Much-libelled Bay of Biscay O — The Prince and the Pauper.

THE people of Manchester, that hitherto inland metropolis of England, have doubtless become accustomed, what with paying interest on the cost of the canal and enjoying the balmy breezes wafted from its surface, to living in a seaport town. But to the outsider, unendowed with the privileges of Manchester citizenship, it seems as odd to leave that city on an ocean voyage as to depart from Denver, Colorado, or the top of Mount Washington. Yet from the glimpse I got of it, Manchester is

an ideal spot to quit with the object of reaching the glorious, refulgent East. A thick autumn fog, saturated soot in suspension, enveloped the town. The drive from the station proved most unattractive — I should not care to liken it to a trip in Hades for fear of being accused of exaggeration, because Hades at least is warm, and I believe the atmosphere must be more clear than that of Manchester. Besides, through all ages, so much abuse has been cast upon the lower regions that I am not going to add to their trouble by invidious comparison. The water in the dock and canal head was about the same colour and thickness as of the air above it, and I admired the instinct of the cab-driver which led him to pull up without rushing from one element into the other. By feeling around in the fog I found the hull of the steamer *Creole Prince*, which was to be my home for a couple of months. By a marvellous bit of good luck, a groping porter came upon my trunk, finding it on the top of the cab, guided in that direction by the hoarse cries of the driver. I followed the advice of the captain who signalled on a memorable occasion, "Don't give up the ship," and, clinging to it, vocifer-

ously instructing the invisible porter, we got the trunk aboard through a series of incredible coincidences, and thus, by a singular streak of favourable fortune, I had the boon of my various belongings during the voyage. When the steamship company sent me their printed rules and regulations, one item therein immediately attracted my attention. It was to the effect that no passenger was allowed to bring liquor on board with him, so this reminded me that certain decoctions were grateful and comforting, as the advertisements say, besides there always being a pleasure in breaking rules; so I at once bought four bottles of a fluid from Caledonia in case I should meet some personal friend on board who did not wear a blue ribbon. I had concealed these flasks among the clothing in my trunk, which may account for my anxiety to get the receptacle on board. I took it that the bottles would be free from observation there, for there could be no rigid examination of one's effects, as a traveller's trunk is his castle, except at the New York custom-house. The blow, however, fell in another direction. On the printed wine list in the smoking-room I was horrified to find that the particular brand I had

invested in was twenty-five cents cheaper per bottle than the price I had paid in London. When you remember that the beverage and myself were both Scotch, the peculiar discomfort of the situation may be imagined. Bang had gone eight saxpences with no prospect of return.

I almost always judge a strange ship by its smoking-room; but this compartment on the *Creole Prince* bore a striking resemblance in size and accoutrements to a rather big, rather long, dry-goods box. This was a disappointment to a man brought up on sumptuous Atlantic liners. There was a door at each end, and two seats along each side, with a couple of round metal tables in between them. I nearly deserted the ship when I saw this inadequate fumigating chamber, but first impressions are never safe guides to follow, and before many days were past I came to look upon that smoking-room with an affection that did not seem possible at the beginning of the voyage.

Manchester runs its section of the Great Deep with all the enthusiasm of a novice. London is a veteran in maritime affairs, and quite often a ship comes to that port without causing any commotion in the west end of the metropolis.

ON THE MERSEY.

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London can start a steamer without so much as a "God bless you," and allow her to wend her way to whatever quarter of the globe she cares to point her prow. Not so Manchester; she provides one tug for the stem and another for the stern of every steamship that leaves her port, and thus the trio go cautiously along the canal, the spirit of Manchester hovering over the craft all the way down the Mersey, murmuring "For Heaven's sake be careful!" The consequence is there are no shipwrecks on the Manchester Canal. Passengers on a liner are not distressed by picking up emaciated, starving sailors in an open boat. No one is ever marooned on its banks and mutinies rarely take place on its quiet waters, for the crews know if they raised a fuss the captain would simply call in the police. What a lesson is this to the turbulent Atlantic Ocean! If navigation were conducted between England and America as circumspectly as it is along the Manchester Ship Canal, Clark Russell would have to abandon his work and occupy himself with the dialect novel.

It takes the best part of a day for a steamer to steal its way down the Manchester Ship

Canal and the trip has many points of difference from an ordinary ocean voyage. I know few other marine trips where a man can sit in a deck chair on an ocean liner and watch cyclists scorching past him. You rarely see sights like this on the Pacific or Indian Ocean, or even on the Mediterranean Sea. I got acquainted with one fellow passenger on the way from the Manchester dock to the big lock that let us out into the Mersey near Liverpool. This man sat alone and disconsolate in his steamer chair, and, imagining he was, perhaps, sad at leaving Manchester, I thought it would cheer him up a bit if I pointed out to him that we could not possibly reach a more depressing spot than the city we had just left. I found, however, that he was a Birmingham man, and quite ready to agree with everything that I could say to the disadvantage of Manchester, his condition being merely that of sorrow in anticipation.

"We have no ship canal in Birmingham," he said, mournfully, "and so we natives are little accustomed to the freaks of the raging main. I always dread the first night at sea, which is now rapidly approaching. Do you know if there is anything one can take for it?"

"Well," I replied, "I have heard it said that champagne is one of the best antidotes, and, as I am always anxious to assist a fellow passenger in distress, I don't mind joining you, if you order a bottle."

"Alas!" said the Birmingham man, "the customs officials have, it seems, sealed up the liquors on board this boat, and we cannot get at them until we are out at sea, when I fear it will be too late."

His evil anticipation proved only too accurate. It was pitch dark when we were turned loose from the great lock which forms the mouth of the canal. The Birmingham man's berth was next to mine, and all that night I realised with painful distinctness what a bad time he was having. It did not seem to me that there was motion enough in the steamship to account for all the distress which had fallen on Birmingham. In fact, I congratulated myself because the room I occupied was so situated that I could not hear the throb of the engines. With the callousness of mankind, however (it being a case in which I could render no assistance), I went to sleep in spite of the fact that a fellow creature so near me was in the most abject misery.

Early next morning upon going on deck I was amazed to learn that we hadn't moved an inch. There had been a thick fog on the Mersey all night, which only cleared away a few minutes before I had left my bunk. Anxious to impart this intelligence, I went down and rapped at the door of the Birmingham man's room.

"How are you feeling?" I inquired.

"Oh, miserable," he answered. "I always have a time like this the first night at sea, but I'll be all right from now on."

"It seemed to me reasonably calm last night," I ventured.

"I have no doubt that it *was* calm," replied the Birmingham man, "but the slightest rocking that would not be perceptible to another, quite upsets me."

"Well," said I, "the only rock that this ship can be likened to is that of Gibraltar. We were anchored all last night, and this fact gives me a scientific interest in your case. It seems to me that an imaginative man prone to seasickness might have his first tussle with the malady the night before he leaves the shore, and then he could thoroughly enjoy the voyage from beginning to end." As the right hand of the

THE DOCKS AT LIVERPOOL.

distressed voyager began groping about the floor as if in search of some missile like a boot, I concluded it well to postpone inquiry regarding *mal de mer* and imagination until some future occasion.

The Bay of Biscay is a much-maligned sheet of water. Nearly all writers have represented it as being ill-tempered and turbulent, whereas, on the contrary, it is as placid as a summer lake. I know what I am talking about because I have been over it twice, and I intend to bring to the notice of the Geographical Society this serious libel against a blameless expanse of inoffensive water.

It was a lovely evening when we encountered the ship *Gabrielle* of Grenville, a port in France. As the reader may not be personally acquainted with this vessel, I venture to explain that she is a three-masted ship, carrying on her deck great heaps of shallow skiffs piled one on top of another, upside down, like so many pie-dishes.

When we sighted the *Gabrielle* all sails were set, and she looked rather fine with such a spread of canvas reflecting the rays of the declining sun. But she was acting queerly,

which is not to be wondered at, considering she is French. There was not much wind blowing, — in fact, the chief characteristic of the Bay of Biscay is absence of wind, — but the *Gabrielle*, taking advantage of the little breeze that was stirring, moved hither and thither in aimless fashion, as if she couldn't make up her mind which way to go, or as if there was no one at the helm, which we afterward found to be the case. Our captain, Mark Campbell, of the *Creole Prince*, surmised that they had lost their reckoning. I do not understand much about navigation, neither do the French, it seems, but it would appear to me to be a simple thing to lock up their reckoning in a cupboard or put it in the safe where it might be had when wanted. I was informed, however, that it is quite a frequent occurrence for French ships to mislay their reckoning and then find themselves in the position of the man in the song who "dunno where 'e are." By the orders of Captain Campbell a huge blackboard was hung out upon our starboard side with the latitude and the longitude written on it plainly in great white figures of chalk. This board was slung up in a conspicuous position at the end of the bridge, and

as we passed the undecided ship, the attention of her officers was called to the figures thus displayed. No one on board was paying the slightest attention to the navigation of the *Gabrielle*. The whole crew were clustered like bees in a group at the side, and one (who was apparently the captain) had elevated himself above the rest, and was gesticulating violently on the mainmast's ladder of rope. They shouted *oui, oui* and *très bien* when we called attention to the second mate's amazing phonography on the blackboard. When they realised the *Creole Prince* was about to pass calmly on its way, the officers and crew raised a simultaneous wail, and every man on board the *Gabrielle* began throwing his arms about as if he were an animated windmill. They were really howling for provisions, and we had flung to them a reckoning which, however interesting to the mathematician, satisfies neither the soul nor the stomach. They had asked for bread, and we had given them a stone in the shape of chalk-marks. When Captain Campbell saw that they were actually in distress, he swung the great steamer slowly round and came up with them again. We tried to intimate to the

master of the *Gabrielle*, with the voice of a foghorn, that it might be well if somebody went to the wheel; but this advice was unheeded, the whole crew dancing about like the inmates of a lunatic asylum off for an excursion upon the sea — there and back for a dollar. Our captain then had to describe a very large circle to keep out of the way of the erratic *Gabrielle*, which was acting similar to her crew. The French hilariously flung one of their little shallops on the sea and bundled a couple of men over the side. It may be added that these sailors spoke French very much more fluently than any of our own crew. They came alongside in a bubbling state of excitement. They had lost their reckoning, they said, but, what was worse, they had consumed all their vegetables. Scurvy had broken out; eight of the men were down with it. They had been fishing for a year off the banks of Newfoundland, and now hadn't the slightest idea where they were — whether in the Atlantic, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, or Lake Superior. They were amazed to learn they were just out of sight of the French coast, and evidently considered their position a wonderful piece of luck.

Over the sides of the steamer were lowered to them great heaps of cabbages, several sacks of potatoes, an oblong case of lime-water, and then, to cap the climax, the captain ordered several pounds of jet-black tobacco to be given them. The two men howled with delight when the tobacco came upon them, as it were, from the sky. A huge giant of a bronzed sailor, who said he was from Brittany, seized a plug and seemed to bite off more than he could chew, but he somehow managed it; then flinging the remnant of the plug to the other sailor, it swiftly disappeared in his mouth. "Tank you, tank you," roared the Breton, which was all the English the two possessed between them. As they rowed back in their little butter-dish to the wandering ship, they shouted across the waters to their comrades the one word "tabac," and a great cheer went up from the decks of the *Gabrielle*. Yet these are the people who are raising the devil on the Newfoundland coast, and shouting "Perfidious" across at England.

CHAPTER II.

Portugal — Spain — Africa and That Sort of Thing — An Overdone Petition — Going Up the Raging Canal to Tunis — The Anxiety We Caused in the Harbour — Some Advice to the French Regarding Navigation.

WE spent one lovely day skirting the coast of Portugal, seeing charming little towns of dazzling white against the reddish ground of the landscape. Somewhat inland we had a fine view of the great Convent of Mafra, 800 feet long from north to south, and 700 feet from east to west, with its 866 rooms, its 5,200 windows, and its sumptuous marble dome. I did not count the windows myself, nor did I visit the rooms, but there is no use of possessing an "Encyclopædia Britannica" if you do not use it, and thus throw a glamour of learning over articles written about travel.

Next we came to Cintra, the Bunker Hill of Lisbon, although Cintra is farther removed from the capital of Portugal than Bunker Hill is from

CASTELLO DA PÈNA, CINTRA.

the capital of Massachusetts. The mountains of Cintra, running down to the coast, rise to the height of three thousand feet. Again the encyclopædia. On the top is a castle, the summer residence of the Court of Portugal. We were all very anxious to see this palace, but a cloud clung to it persistently, and rendered it invisible. Since that time, however, Great Britain and Portugal have come to an amicable understanding, and, doubtless, Portugal has now arranged that no cloud shall hover in the vicinity of its palace when an English steamer is passing. There was a dim glimpse of Lisbon as we crossed the wide mouth of the Tagus, and the fishing-boats in the neighbourhood, with their lateen sails, had a distinctly Eastern appearance. We were evidently drawing farther and farther away from Manchester. There flies along this coast a large semi-marine bird with a long beak. Alas! I cannot give its name, so it is impossible to look it up in the encyclopædia, but the Portuguese method of catching it is well worthy of the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to things in general. This bird lives on fish, and hovers high in the sky to keep an alert eye on the ocean below, dropping on a

good thing now and then, like the water-hawk it is. The Portuguese have a pleasant habit of nailing a fish to a two-inch plank, and setting the plank afloat with the fish uppermost. The ill-fated bird, flying a mile high, then offers a terrible example of the futility of taking an interest in only one thing at a time. The bird is well posted on piscatorial subjects, but is utterly ignorant of the timber trade, so when it drops, like a meteor through the air, down upon the fish, it gets the fish undoubtedly, but it dies instantly, as its beak pierces the floating timber underneath. This seems to show that doctors are quite correct when they say that food should not be bolted too hurriedly.

It was midnight when we passed Gibraltar. I regret to say it has always been my luck to come upon this celebrated fortress in the darkness. Pretty nearly everybody else in the world has seen Gibraltar, excepting myself. As we steamed along through the smooth black waters, the rock loomed up darkly ahead, and a wicked little quick-firing light at its foot guided the vessel. However, there is one satisfaction in viewing the rock at midnight, for as we passed through the Straits, and saw its huge dark bulk

GIBRALTAR.

against the less dark sky, the resemblance to one of Landseer's lions was most striking. The great beast lies there with its head facing the Atlantic, watching every craft that approaches the narrow channel. They tell me that in the school-books of Spain it is never admitted that Gibraltar belongs to the British. Spain, it seems, allows this people to occupy Gibraltar temporarily, and as soon as Spain has need of the rock, of course she will take it. It is always pleasant to know that if you want a thing, all you have to do is to go and get it. I think it shows a beautiful disposition on the part of Britain to spend so much money in running tunnels through the rock of Gibraltar, and in building great docks, when it knows that at any moment Spain may come forward and say, politely, "I'll trouble you for that bit of rock, if you please." Truly, as Mark Twain remarked, the British are mentioned in Scripture, where it says that "The meek shall inherit the earth." It is very fortunate for Great Britain that Spain has no particular use for Gibraltar at the present moment, because I am sure England would be loath to give it up, even though terrorised by Spain.

Next morning by daybreak the steamer was heading in for the town of Malaga, and a more beautiful sight than that ancient city and its surroundings, with its background of high mountains, would be difficult to imagine. I was very much impressed with the magnificence of Malaga Cathedral, standing out massively above the town with the level rays of the scarcely risen sun illuminating it, and was, therefore, correspondingly depressed when I read in the afore-mentioned encyclopædia, after my return, that the building is of no importance whatever, and that it shows how Spain has degenerated in architecture, her failure in this line being nearly as great as her collapse in war. The next largest structure in Malaga appears to be the bull-fighting building, but as the encyclopædia is silent about this coliseum of red brick, I dare not venture an opinion regarding its architecture.

I toured all day along the southern coast of Spain, travelling by means of the roads which skirt the seashore, my conveyance being a binocular glass. It is a most charming method of travel, seated in a steamer chair, and bringing the road right up to the ship with the

MALAGA.

assistance of a strong pair of glasses. I passed many Spaniards on the road, mostly mounted on mules, the riders generally seated far astern on the animal, projecting their legs forward at an angle of forty-five degrees. The Spaniards were invariably occupied in either smoking a cigarette or rolling one. I passed through several picturesque towns, mostly situated on hills, or frowning promontories; sometimes clustered round an ancient Moorish castle, and often the steamer dragged my tardy opera-glass away from some spot in which I wished, like Lu, to linger longer. There are few signs of manufacture along the southern Spanish coast, the majority of the inhabitants apparently being engaged in riding mules to and fro. Here and there, near the swampy marshes where esparto grass flourishes, are long, low, white one-story buildings with tall chimneys, where the grass is prepared for the making of paper. Paper being the great source of Spanish currency, they do well to foster the growth of esparto. All along the coast are high mountains, scored in a great many places where the torrents have been in too great a hurry to get to the sea. One spot was pointed out to me

as an example of the efficacy of prayer. For three years the inhabitants of the town had yearned for rain, but not a drop fell in all that time. The Spaniard rarely quenches his thirst with so elementary a liquid as water, and as for washing, he never thinks of it, so it takes about three years of drought to make a Spaniard realise that the weather is abnormally dry. At last, however, the priests of the place called out the whole town and inaugurated a general prayer-meeting for rain. That night a storm burst with such force in the mountains that the torrent swept the village into the Mediterranean Sea. The survivors seemed to think that this was rather overdoing a good thing, and have ever since been careful not to be too pious.

It was evening when we left the coast of Europe, and the next afternoon we took on the coast of Africa. The principal need of the northern coast of Africa, as viewed from the steamer's deck, seems to be inhabitants. For miles and miles along the coast not a house or a human being was to be seen, and yet the land is said to be fertile and the climate a dream of delight. As France has practically

collared all this portion of the earth, it strikes an impartial observer that the sensible thing for that country to do would be to induce emigrants to settle upon these lands, instead of fooling round the world interfering with other people's possessions. But France has recently resolved to acquire the leather medal for stupidity, and has become a troublesome neighbour, while as a coloniser she is beneath contempt.

It was a lovely evening when we passed the ruins of ancient Carthage, and dropped anchor in the Bay of Tunis. The outlook from the steamer's deck is one worth going many miles to see. Far to the east a mountain range skirts the waters of the bay, while to the west is a picturesque rolling country, the near hills dotted with white villas on the site of ancient Carthage. Hannibal would now doubtless be shocked to learn that his great metropolis is merely a pleasant summer resort for the people of Tunis. Closer at hand lies the little seaport town of Goletta, once the harbour of Tunis, the Liverpool of the province, but here there is the Manchester Ship Canal business over again, and foreign

steamers now give Goletta the go-by, proceeding direct to Tunis itself, the Manchester of the country. We were compelled to drop anchor because we had arrived outside at the hour during which two mail steamers are timed to leave Tunis, and the canal here differs from the one at Manchester in that two steamers cannot pass each other on its murky waters. These mail steamers, being French, naturally never thought of leaving at the hour indicated. French trains and French steamers love to be late. If a French conveyance ever so far forgot itself as to depart at the hour named on the time-table, it would not have a passenger on board, for every one counts on the universal tardiness. Finally, we saw the two steamers coming in procession, apparently overland, with all flags flying. They passed us just as darkness set in, two hours late, more or less, and then we were allowed to hoist our anchor and feel our way into the big ditch. The canal is something like twelve miles long, and is a straight, unlovely, black trench, with banks of black mud. They have put electric lights all along this waterway, and so navigation is possible at night. The French Government com-

TEMPLE AT CARTHAGE.

pels any ship entering the harbour of Tunis to take on a pilot, no one but a Frenchman, of course, being allowed to act in that capacity. It might be supposed that the French Government would insist that the pilots should know something of their business, but this is too great a compliment to pay to French logic. The pilot we took aboard was a fat man, with charming manners, but little skill at navigation. He spoke no English, but after having the matter explained to him he very quickly picked up the knowledge that one side of the ship was port and the other starboard. The French are a very adaptable people.

Darkness had settled around us when the fat man took up his position in front of the pilot-house on the bridge. Captain Campbell, master of the *Creole Prince*, stood near the telegraph which communicated with the engine room, and his genial face was overcast with a shadow of uneasiness. The ship was practically out of his charge, and the pilot now on board was responsible for its safety; nevertheless the captain was on the alert, and all the passengers certainly felt a sense of relief that this was so, for the English-speaking person has little confi-

dence in a foreign commander. The man at the wheel was a typical bullet-headed British sailor, with a voice like a foghorn; the way that he would sonorously roll out the words "Staaarrr-brd, sir!" might have been a lesson in elocution to the greatest actor living. It was evident that the actions of the French pilot did not commend themselves to the captain.

Not knowing the essential words "port" and "starboard," the pilot stood there and waved his hand to right or left, saying nothing. This appeared to me a practical device, but it did not please the captain. It seems that if a pilot does not speak out so that others may hear, the substituted wave of the hand is not evidence in a court of inquiry. "Speak up," said the captain. "That side's starboard, and that side's port; say so. Give your command so that the wheelman can hear you." After that we had extraordinary commands, as "Port, je vous demand pardon, monsieur, je dire starboard." The inevitable result was that before long we felt underfoot a slight shiver which told us that the ship was aground. With a quick movement the captain sprang to the telegraph, and reversed the engine. Luckily the banks of the canal are

like soft soap, and the steamer slipped away from Africa as if she were being launched on greased timber. I don't know what the captain said to the pilot. The conversation was in very low tones, and the communication was apparently delivered with extreme politeness, but anyhow, the result was that the fat man delivered up the ship to its master and went down into the cabin, where a bottle of excellent brandy was awaiting him. He proved more expert at the brandy than at the piloting. Meanwhile, Captain Campbell, with a sigh of relief, ran the steamer the length of the canal without a hitch.

The basin of Tunis which forms the terminus of the canal is not of very great capacity, and a few ships crowd it uncomfortably. It was amazing how our own vessel had grown since we left Manchester. Alongside of the big transatlantic liners at Liverpool, the *Creole Prince* was but an ordinary-sized steamer, but on the Mediterranean she seemed to have enlarged tremendously, and now overtopped anything we saw in those waters. Our respect for her good qualities had increased in proportion, and nowhere did she look so big as in that con-

tracted harbour of Tunis. The white glare of arc lamps lit up the gloomy water of the harbour, and showed us the craft of differing variety among which we must take our place. To the left was a steam dredge which had apparently just left off working. In front of us was a trim two-masted yacht with the tricolour flying aloft, and her guests on the smooth white deck under the awning enjoyed after-dinner coffee. To the right was a small French cruiser of exquisite shape, everything neat and trim about her, bristling with cannon, and looking rather formidable with her ram-shaped bow. All was calm and peaceful when the towering sharp bow of the *Creole Prince* intruded itself and claimed a place in this restricted basin. Having come in stem forward and wishing to go out stem forward when the time came for bidding farewell to Tunis, the steamer naturally had to be turned around. The space for performing this operation certainly looked to a landsman rather confined, and the bulk of the steamer appeared to have increased alarmingly since we had left the Mediterranean. It looked as if we were trying to put too big a peg into too small a hole.

Edgar Saltus has somewhere remarked that

DANCING GIRLS, TUNIS.

the French fear nothing but danger, and we were to have an exemplification of this epigram. The helm was set at the proper angle and, as the screw began churning the turbid water, the stern of the steamer swerved slowly around toward the barge with the dredging outfit on it. The watchman on the barge suddenly saw looming over him the black mountainous stern of our ship, and he gave himself up for lost. He uttered a cry resembling a scream, which roused the echoes of the harbour and brought out half a dozen navvies from their supper in the house on the boat. All, raising simultaneous voices, implored our captain to spare them.

"How many feet have you to clear that barge, Mr. Stewart?" cried the captain from the bridge.

"Twenty feet, sir," reported the second officer at the stern, in stentorian voice. The huge hull, moving with the leisurely, impressive dignity of a floating continent, cleared the animated lunatic asylum by the number of feet that Mr. Stewart had predicted, and a sudden calm fell upon the inhabitants of the barge.

Now we approached the yacht, and this craft was evidently not going to be outdone in excite-

ment by the barge. The wild commotion that had just been seen on the dredge communicated itself to the vessel of pleasure. Each man sprang to his feet, chairs were overturned, and a panic ensued. The crew rushed here and there. Everybody seemed to be in command. Half a dozen sailors got long slender poles, which they pointed at us over the bulwarks, giving the pretty yacht the appearance of a porcupine. Shrieks went up as though inevitable destruction was bearing down upon them. The commander wrung his hands and appealed pathetically to our skipper as from one captain to another. We began to be alarmed ourselves at the seemingly inevitable international slaughter.

"How many feet have you to clear that yacht, Mr. Stewart?" rang out the voice of the captain.

"Thirty feet, sir," answered the confident Stewart, and sure enough we passed the yacht at that distance, and, as Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Silence like a poultice came to heal the blows of sound." And thus the yacht was saved!

Some one leaned over the bulwarks of the

A WOMAN OF TUNIS.

cruiser and yelled to our captain to mind what he was about. Then, receiving no reply and feeling we were bent on the annihilation of the French fleet with true British perfidy, the naval officer threw all self-control to the winds, flung his hands despairingly into the air, and piped the crew on deck. It is amazing how many men a small French war-vessel will hold. They came swarming up from every conceivable aperture; and the scene reminded me of nothing so much as a densely inhabited ant-hill suddenly poked with a stick. The commotion on the gunboat was a hundred times greater than the turmoil on the barge or the yacht, because there were a hundred times more men on the cruiser than on either of the other craft. I feared some of them would jump overboard in their excitement. The men tumbled over each other in their hurry. The shrill wailing shriek of the boatswain's whistle sounded incessantly, but nobody seemed to pay the least attention to it. It was all like a nightmare remembrance of a comic pirate opera.

Suddenly there was a sharp word of command from our captain, and the anchor plunged heading with a glorious splash to the accompany-

ing roar of the running chain. The thick rope from the stern, attached to a stout pillar ashore, whose dancing, bending slack had been coquettishly kissing the face of the waters, grew gradually taut, and the big ship came to rest. Captain Campbell, having rung off his engineer, now stood with one hand on the rail, and taking off his cap with the other, said suavely to the commander of the ironclad:

"I think there is space between us, sir, for safety, but if you wish, I can move a few feet farther away."

The naval officer looked down at the intervening water for a few moments, then said, good-naturally, considering all the fuss there had been:

"*Très bien, très bien;* al-right, al-right, monsieur le capitaine."

I have written this account of our entering the harbour at Tunis with some detail because I am fond of my friends the French, and would like to do them a service. The squirrel is a beautiful, sprightly animal, charming in all its movements, lithe, quick, and easily excited, but it does not take to the water like the stolid beaver. Each to his place, and thus are the

uses of the universe well served. I doubt if Providence ever arranged for a Frenchman to take command of a ship. A strong fleet has never done France any good, and never will. Naval figures are most deceptive. A Frenchman figures up that as he has a hundred ships and the other fellow has only fifty, he can smash up that fifty and have half a hundred left, coming out, therefore, the victor. This is arithmetically correct, and thus are the French nation deluded by mathematics; but mathematics have a nasty habit of going to pieces when the guns begin to roar. The multiplication table does not seem able to stand the impact of a well-aimed shell. At the time France was meditating interference on behalf of her neighbour in the Spanish-American war, a French naval officer outlined to me with sublime confidence the programme of his country should such an intervention take place. It was admirably simple.

"We would go over," he said, "with our fleet and smash up the American fleet. Then we would never allow them to build another ship. We would say to them, 'If you attempt to construct a battle-ship we will go over and smash

it before it is ready to be launched.' Then the Americans would be helpless so far as interference with European affairs is concerned."

"But what would the American fleet be doing all this time?" I inquired.

"What could it do?" he replied in amazement at such a question. "We have ten ships to their one!"

The fate of a French fleet in Santiago harbour would have been exactly similar to that of the Spanish. The American and the English know how to handle their ships, and incidentally their guns, while the French do not. A French ironclad battered away at Crete for four hours, and only added to the hilarity of nations. The *Camperdown* four miles away, fired four shots from a big gun, and the Cretan fort dissolved in dust. Of late years the French have been swaggering around the world a good deal, interfering with the preserves of peaceable nations, and my serious advice to them is to chuck it, otherwise they will run their fleet against somebody else's navy, and then it will be—"The boy, oh, where was he?" If the French are wise they will turn their battle-ships into mercantile craft, and make some money in com-

merce. They should take to heart the beautiful lines of a Western poem, which runs :

"Mother, may I go out to swim?" "Yes, my darling daughter;
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb, but don't go near the water."

CHAPTER III.

French Colonising — The Tunis Arabs — An African Music-hall — A Notable Guide and His Sterling Qualities — Delights of Shopping in Tunis — Carthage a Disappointment.

THERE is a word, a very graphic word, which applies to French colonising, and that word I make them a present of. It is the word "perfidious." A lovely word and expressive. France jumped into Algeria, and swore by all the gods that she would not stay there, but she stayed just the same. She did likewise with Tunis; Madagascar also. The first thing she does when she collars a foreign place is to lay out a boulevard and build a café chantant. The moment you set foot on the quay at Tunis, you think you are in a French provincial town. You find yourself in the Avenue de la Marine, with a street car line running along it; fare, ten centimes. There is a row of trees down the centre, and electrical lights flare every-

CURIOSITY SHOP, TUNIS

where. Every second building is a café with little iron tables in regular rows outside, round which Frenchmen sit in groups drinking absinthe and cognac, and trying to imagine themselves in Paris. This avenue runs as straight as a line from the custom-house to the fine Moorish gateway, whose name, Bab-el-Bahr, the French have conventionalised into Porte de France. Passing through the gateway the change is startling. A few steps, and the West becomes the East. On one side of the gate is a huge café chantant, brilliant with electricity, bustling and noisy waiters hustling about; *ici on parle Français;* the usual suggestive songs on the stage, and all that goes to make a café chantant in Paris. On the other side, narrow slits of thoroughfares, darkness, silence, stealthy movement of hooded, cloaked, masked, mysterious figures, and an undefinable sense of impending danger. The surroundings are of a sort in which a man might suddenly disappear and never come to the surface again. A cold shiver up the back-bone seems to anticipate the sudden thrust of a hidden knife, and one goes hurriedly back through the gate again, with a feeling of relief to be in the blaze of electricity once more.

The Tunisian Arab is a personage of great dignity and even majesty of deportment. Man for man, the little French soldier is not to be compared with him. He is built on a generous scale, and is usually lighter in complexion than most of his French conquerors. The flowing robes he wears give free play to his well-proportioned limbs, and the proud swagger of him as he comes down the street is something beautiful to behold. Like the man who broke the bank, he walks along the Bois de Boulogne with an independent air that is inimitable. You would think he owned the earth, whereas he does not possess even his native portion of it. How, then, came this free and independent people to be under the dominion of an alien race? "Don't swear, but shoot," said the Rough Rider, when that high-class regiment fell into an ambush; and in this remark lies the key to empire. A man sitting in an armchair, working a Maxim, can make it very unpleasant for the neighbourhood. Personal bravery is of no effect when confronted with a machine gun. A long laminated shooting iron, built in the fashion of 1699, is useless against the magazine rifle of two hundred years later. The Arabs swore by

Mahomet, the inventor of their religion, and shot after the fashion of Wartz, the inventor of gunpowder. So, naturally, they were thrashed. They were too far behind the times.

Then, again, they did not fall in with modern ideas, when collecting their revenue. Well into the present century, they depended on piracy, instead of adopting its modern equivalent, the custom-house, and thus they gave France an excuse for interfering.

A party of us chartered a guide, who spoke seven languages so badly that if he had added one or two more to his list, he would have been incomprehensible. I could make little of his English, less of his French, and nothing at all of his Arabic, Phœnician, and Sanscrit. He seemed surprised that we did not care to go to the French café chantant, and he assured us that the singing was better than at native entertainments, while the beer and the brandy were much preferable. However, we had not come to Africa to see a second-hand French ballet, when there was a Moorish show to be witnessed on its native heath. It detracted somewhat from the romance of the expedition, when he bundled us into an open street car, very much

similar to the summer public vehicles in any city in America, except that in Tunis two horses supplied the electricity. We rode on through the dark narrow streets, and after a journey of half a mile or so, descended in front of the place of entertainment. We were disgusted to find that the price of tickets was one franc each. Not that we objected to the payment of twenty cents, but we would have preferred to have been asked for some unpronounceable Moorish coin whose value we did not understand.

International exhibitions ought to be suppressed. They take away all the delights of foreign travel. The show we were called upon to endure was in no wise different from what a visitor to the Chicago Exhibition might have seen ; it wasn't even improper. It is true that the audience consisted largely of Arabs in their picturesque costume and headgear. Excellent coffee, too, was two cents a cup, which was cheaper than the prices ruling in Chicago. The four or five girls who had armchairs in the centre of the back of the stage were not uncomely specimens of the human race. An energetic young man at the right hand side put

A MOORISH PERFORMANCE AT TUNIS.

in his time at hard labour on an earthenware drum open at one end and covered with calf skin at the other, on which he pounded spasmodically with his eight fingers. He seemed to be working by the day rather than by the job, and every now and then began drumming with extraordinary impetuosity; but lassitude soon overcame him, and, gradually tapering off, he finally ceased, and put in some time polishing the head of the drum by a circular motion upon his trousers. Then, after a rest, during which he gazed around upon us seated at the small tables, he suddenly recollected what he was paid for, and attacked his drum with renewed fury. The vocal music was of the same intermittent character. It was a sort of go-as-you please concert. A girl would unexpectedly begin an aimless wail in a high key and the rest would join in, the drummer beating time or not as best it pleased him; then the girl was seen to reconsider the matter and drop out, whereupon, by and by, inspiration seized another of the group, with a similar inconsequent result. Several of the male performers, with weird instruments, played when it suited them. All in all, there was a deplorable lack of cohesion in the performance.

It was, indeed, a concert of Africa, but it reminded me of nothing so much as the Concert of Europe when indulging in a Cretan symphony.

Next day, in charge of the same guide, we perambulated the bazaars of Tunis. These consist of an inextricable maze of rabbit warrens, roofed with timber and for the most part shrouded in twilight gloom. On each side of the arcaded alleys — alleys so narrow that not more than two or three can walk abreast in them — are little cubby-holes of shops where things are for sale. There is one advantage in dealing with the bazaars at Tunis, and that is you are certain of the genuineness of the articles you purchase. All the cutlery and strange implements are made in Birmingham, and the cloths for the most part come from Manchester. Of course you sometimes run across goods from Germany, but a man with reasonable care may be certain that he is bringing back with him articles of undoubted English Midland make. We saw them unpacking bales that had come by our own steamer the night before, and were naturally delighted to have an opportunity of encouraging the commerce of Manchester.

Gratitude here leads me to say a word or

BAZAAR IN TUNIS.

two in favour of our guide, and I cordially recommend him to any traveller who happens to touch at Tunis. I am sorry that I cannot remember his name, for he told us he had one, but you will have no difficulty in finding him. Most of the guides who apply for your favour seem not to have washed themselves for the last three years. Very well, you pick out the guide who has not had a bath for five years and that's our man. You can't miss him. He comes of a distinguished family. His grandfather was one of those estimable pirates who brought down on Tunis the resentment of united Europe; the grandson carries on the same business, but, like a civilised man, has some respect for the forms of law. We had him on the second day simply because we could not shake him off, short of killing him, and we didn't like to do that, being in a strange country. Finding it impossible to get rid of him, we took him along, for he explained to us that we belonged to him by right of discovery. In the bazaar, when we wanted to stop at some attractive shop, which probably would not pay him commission, he dragged us boldly away, crying, "This man is a thief; avoid him."

I have no reason to doubt the truthfulness of his assertion, and naturally he wished to take us to his own particular thieves. The guide was exceedingly frank in speaking of his own protegés in trade. "This man," he would say, airily, "will treat you right. He is not honest, exactly, but *I* am here," whereupon he would smite his breast, "and I will see that you are fairly dealt with." The trader would smile, and spread out before us beautiful Manchester goods which he informed us in a whisper were made by the ladies of the Sultan's harem, who, now that the French had come, were compelled to do something to wile away the time, their income having been seriously diminished on account of the invasion. By the grace of the Bey or the Dey, or whoever the nominal governor is, this particular trader was allowed to sell these priceless scarves for the insignificant figure of $10 each. The scarves were no strangers to me; I had seen them in suburban London shops marked 11¾d. apiece, but when the trader mentioned $10, our guide became furious. "Thief and robber!" he exclaimed, "did I not tell you that these men were under my protection? Ten dollars!—that is pirating! No,

BEDOUIN CAMP ON ROUTE FROM TUNIS TO CARTHAGE.

they shall pay no such money," and snatching the scarf from the hand of the trader, he rapidly folded it in a piece of brown paper and passed it on to us, saying with virtuous indignation in his tones, "You will pay him no ten dollars; that is what the French are charged. Give him five dollars and I will make him take it. I shall not have my people robbed!"

The shopkeeper protested with vociferous indignation that he would be ruined were such a transaction completed. My friend the doctor waved aside the wrapped parcel.

"No, no," he cried. "We cannot consent to rob this poor man of his just gains. We are on a friendly tour, not on a piratical expedition, and refuse to take advantage of your coercion of the shopkeeper. This scarf, made in a harem, is well worth $25, and we cannot consent to take it for less." The guide looked bewildered.

"Very well," he said with a sigh, "he will take $25."

"Alas!" said the doctor, "we cannot afford so much, therefore the purchase must stand over till we return to Tunis richer men. Come away and show us another street."

The one thing that Tunis really manufactures is the brimless tasselled red Turkish cap, called tarbush or Fez, which it makes for all the Moslem world. Tunis also does a little silk weaving, but if Manchester were to become suddenly engrossed by the ship canal to the neglect of her looms, most of the shops from Tunis to Damascus would have to put up their shutters, if they possess such a thing.

The guide lured us into hiring a carriage and driving out into the so-called ruins of Carthage. This involved a long journey over a flat, seemingly arid country on a reasonably jolty bad road, and when you reach Carthage, Coney Island is a wealth of antiquity compared to it. Carthage is the most disappointing city in the ruin line that I ever visited, and I have seen some of the famous ruined towns in America. I suppose Carthage actually did stand on that spot, but there are few evidences left of the fact outside of the guide book.

CHAPTER IV.

Malta — The Drama City of Valetta — Some Secrets of English Rule — A Marvellous Drummer — The Guide with Forty Languages.

IN the evening we left Tunis and struck across the water for Malta. It was late in the afternoon of next day when we skirted the island of Goza, which is practically Malta's next-door neighbour. The island of Goza seems to have been constructed somewhat as a Scotchman makes oatmeal porridge. When porridge comes to the boil its surface is turbulent, with small active volcanoes which become conical extinct craters as the mixture hardens. The island of Goza is covered with these solidified craters, and seems, therefore, to have risen by heaven's command out of the azure main by volcanic action. The island should by right be inhabited by Scotchmen, for it possesses a coin valued at one-sixth of

a cent, and if, as the saying has it, the farthing was invented to enable Scotchmen to contribute to the cause of religion, then the islands of Goza and Malta should be three times more attractive to us Scotsmen as a place of residence than any other spot on earth.

Malta is the Clapham Junction of the Mediterranean Sea. As almost any train you enter near London will run you ultimately into Clapham Junction, so nearly every steamer on the Mediterranean Sea will land you at Malta if you give it time.

The entrance into the harbour at Valetta at night is most imposing. Valetta did not seem real, but looked like stage scenery got up for a naval display at Drury Lane Theatre. Once ashore the illusion was far from being dispelled, and one could easily fancy himself to be walking amongst the characters of a drama. The smartly uniformed naval officers might well have trod the boards of the Adelphi in London. Greeks, Italians, Arabs, and almost every other nationality were to be met in the street. Then the costume of the women lends a picturesque detail to the general stagy effect. They wear a sort of lateen sail enveloper made of

GRAND HARBOUR, MALTA.

black cloth, and the arch of this over the head appears to be kept in place by a wire like a pneumatic tire. The end of this wire is held in the hand of the lady who wears this lateen enveloper, and by giving it a twist this way or that, she can set sail as pleases her, and cover her face or leave it exposed as the whim dictates. I was told that Napoleon and his troops treated the women of Malta so badly that they adopted this black costume on somewhat the same principle as the French themselves drape in mourning the statue groups of Alsace and Lorraine in the Place de la Concord, Paris. I rather doubt the truth of this story, because Napoleon, honest man, occupied himself in stealing, most of the time he was in Malta. He looted, from the church and elsewhere, everything of value he could lay his hands on, and as he was only six days altogether in Malta, it will be evident to his detractors that, after seeing all the sights and engaging in industrious thievery, there was not much time left for anything else.

Talking about highway robbery, one cannot but admire the English, who stood by while some one else paid the expense of fortifying

Malta, building up the town, and all that, and when it was completed calmly collared it. Fools build fortresses; the English come and live in them. Malta certainly possesses what is probably the finest harbour in the world, and I wish I owned it myself. The exasperating thing to other nations is, that when England does put the lion's paw on a place the natives actually have the indecency to prefer English rule, and, like the man in the advertisement, will take no other. The Maltese revolted against the French, and lost twenty thousand men in endeavouring to oust them. *Per contra*, they cried for English rule and would not be happy till they got it. Now why is this? It seems to me if I were a Frenchman, or a German, or a Russian, or a Spaniard, that is one of the first things I should try to find out, so in my rôle of genial friend of all these nationalities, I shall give them the result of my own investigations into the subject. It is because England is a wholesale robber who never descends to petty larceny. She grabs the big offices for herself, and is content to let the natives fill all the smaller ones. If you gave England the earth, which it were superfluous to do, because she has got most of it, she would

put one of her own governors at the head of every state, place her own generals and chief officials in command of the armies and the departments, and then she would divide the swag of the smaller offices with those whom she would piously say Providence had set her to rule over. Now when France, *par exemple*, jumps into somebody else's territory, pretending she is not going to stay and then does stay, she takes everything to herself. Every official, from the governor-general down to the most insignificant gendarme, must be a Frenchman. Every concession given must be bestowed upon Frenchmen; the foreigner or the native gets no show. The Frenchman even keeps out foreign trade, and in many French ports will not even allow a foreign vessel to enter. Now, this is terrible folly, for how are you going to take the breeks of a foreigner if you do not let him approach your gates? England throws her ports wide open to the world, saying, with a fine assumption of generosity: "You see I love all people so much that I allow them the same privileges as myself," which is merely the modern equivalent of "Will you walk into my parlour," because if you keep the outsider at arm's length, how are

you to loot him? And thus is England wealthy. The restricted colonies of the French resemble the Western family who made a dollar a day by trading a jack-knife around among the members thereof, but although each seemed to make a profit on the deal, there was no more money at night in the family than there had been in the morning. In trade you must loot or be looted, otherwise it is like going to a horse-race and not making a bet.

But what seems to me the chief element in the success of English rule is that she leaves small things alone. She goes in for essentials, and lets trivialities take care of themselves. For instance, if I were Governor of Malta, one of the very first things I would do would be to melt up about six thousand of their church bells. But England is wiser, she stands the din and lets them be. The Maltese actually enjoy the racket. When a Maltese man wishes to indulge in a quiet, peaceful after-dinner cigarette he goes to a street-crossing where there are four churches within a few yards of each other, each church having from sixteen to thirty-two bells, all tuned differently, and all clashing at the one time, as if one church were trying to drown out the

other, "with a clang and clash and roar, what a horrible outpour on the bosom of the palpitating air!" The English curse the bells, but never interfere with them.

I remember once in my oversea wanderings being landed upon the island of Jersey. Becoming interested in the history of the place, I searched round the town for a public library. Being told it was in the public square, and not finding it there, I asked a labouring man if he could tell me where the town library was.

"I don't wonder at you asking," he said, crossly, "because what sensible man could be expected to understand such lingo as that up there?" He pointed to a large building which I had not noticed, where, carved in the stone, under the cornice, were the words, "Bibliothèque Publique."

"Now," continued the workman, who quite evidently had a grievance against the government of the island, "will you tell me whether England owns this place or not?"

"There is no question about that," I replied. "She does."

"Then what does she mean by allowing a sign like that to be put up? If this place be-

longs to England, isn't the English language good enough for her? If that's a public library, why not say so, instead of sticking up foolish French words which mean nothing?"

Now, I think that, quite unconsciously and quite unappreciatively, the workman had touched on one of the secrets of success in English rule. England leaves to the people she governs "the little things they care about," and thus her rule is a success.

Malta has an opera-house which the islanders assert is the handsomest structure of its kind in the world, and I am not sure but they are right although the Paris Opera House takes a lot of beating, and the one at Vienna has points of merit. What struck me as one of the chief marks of architectural beauty about the Valetta Opera House is that the dress seats cost only seventy-five cents, about one-third of the London price for similar seats. I saw the ruling class of Malta pour into the opera-house in great numbers, dress coats less numerous perhaps than uniforms, but even a stall at such a price did not tempt me, for I was having a good deal of opera outside. There is a most enchanting café situated on a square, in the centre of

A STREET IN MALTA.

which stands a marble statue, and at this café various kinds of liquid refreshment can be obtained at the little tables dotted around in front of it, which, together with the latest London paper taken in by the café, makes life worth living. Better is liberty than a stalled ox, or even an opera stall. Perhaps the cheapness of an opera stall is counterbalanced by the cheapness of the entertainment. I don't know what kind of companies give performances there.

An Englishman out West encountered a Red Indian who had quite evidently abandoned the warpath and the collection of scalps.

"What do you do?" asked the Englishman.

"Me preach," replied the Indian.

"How much do you make at that?"

"Me sometimes make shilling, sometimes two shillings."

"That's damned poor pay," said the Englishman.

"It's damned poor preach," replied the Indian.

The opera at Malta may be better than the preaching of the aborigine, but I don't think it could equal the free concert we had in the square from a regimental band. And then again tobacco is so cheap in Malta that a conscientious smoker

does not care to occupy a stall at the opera where smoking is not allowed, because it takes him all his time to consume the money he sets aside for daily indulgence in the nicotine habit anyhow.

The concert in the square was well worth listening to. The band did not play Wagner as a military organisation in Germany would have done, but they gave us:

"The tunes that mean so much to you alone,
Common tunes that make you choke and blow your nose,
Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan;"

music that might be played without raising a single emotion within a mile of one's own hearth-stone, yet strains which bring him up with a round turn when he gets a few thousand miles away from home. Harmony has a habit of entwining itself with incidents and individuals, and it is the greatest of mental picture painters. Who does not know some particular tune whose chords, the moment heard, instantly place upon his mental stage the figures of a drama which has been acted in his past life?

But it was the drummer I was about to speak of when I mentioned the band. He was tall and thin as a lamp-post. I think he must have

approached seven feet in height. He had strapped before him a drum that in one way was as thin as himself, but its circumference was something marvellous; it looked like a caricature in miniature of the great wheel at the World's Fair. I never knew before that the British army lent itself to comicality, but a more amazing performance than that drummer gave us, I have rarely seen on any stage. During the first part of the concert he drummed with admirable reticence, giving us no hint of the gymnastics that were to follow. It was the ordinary Thursday performance at the Crystal Palace, to be ended by fireworks. The man was so thin, and his arms were so long, that I think each of them could have easily doubled around his body twice. Anyhow, he took a few loops out of himself, and giving a preliminary flourish of his hands, proceeded to show us what might be done with two sticks and a drum. All thought of the music was lost as we watched this man acting like a windmill in a hurricane, struck by lightning. He crossed his arms above his head and drummed, he struck at the helpless instrument behind his back, first on one side, then on the other, finally on both

sides at once. His motions, like the flicker of a whirling firebrand, dazzled the eye. He would fling his right arm around under his left arm and smite the drum that way, while his left arm was creeping around the back of his neck and hitting the other disc. Then he would suddenly reverse the performance, all the while keeping the most perfect time, the great full-moon face of the drum seeming the picture of amazement, never knowing where it was going to be hit next. I expected the man would tie himself up in a hard knot, and that the regiment would have to lay him out on his back in the square and unravel him when the performance was over. If this man had been sent up the Nile with his drum the dervishes would never have stopped running from Omdurman to the equator.

The principal sight of Malta is the Church of St. John, but people don't go there so much to see the church as to hear the description by the sacristan who takes you through. This man can describe the Church of St. John in forty-four languages and dialects. He only understands one of these languages, and he has the others entirely by rote. If you give him a hint

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, MALTA.

as to your nationality, and start him fairly at the door of the church and don't interrupt, he will bring you through every chapel, past every tomb, round by each altar, and give you a perfect description in your own language of all the saints; but if you break in upon him and say:

"I beg your pardon, but did you mention that Michael Angelo was the painter of that picture in the knight's hall?" then the man is lost, and he looks at you in the most reproachful way, as if you were deliberately taking an unfair advantage of him. He has his rigmarole punctuated by certain pillars and certain chapels. These form, as it were, the chapter heads of his lecture, and if you take him to the door of any particular chapel he can begin his conversational explanation all right, but as to questioning him between any of two points, you might as well ask the trapeze artist to pause between the bar he was swinging from and the one he was about to clutch. By judiciously interrupting this caretaker, you will have far more than the worth of the quarter he charges you by the time you get round the church.

CHAPTER V.

Impressions of Alexandra — The Coinage and the Sphinx — Tommy's Recreation — The American Occupation — Cyprus.

ENGLAND is the modern possessor of the seven-league boots. She has acquired for herself stepping-stones over all the seven seas. She steps from her own home island to Gibraltar, Gibraltar to Malta, Malta to Alexandra, Alexandra to Aden, Aden to Ceylon, Ceylon to Singapore, Singapore to Hong Kong, Hong Kong to Vancouver, Vancouver to Newfoundland, and from Newfoundland back to England again, and this is merely one route; there are others.

We took our seven-league step from Malta to Alexandra, and came upon this ancient city in the early afternoon. The appearance of Alexandra reminded me of Buffalo, New York, as you approach it from Lake Erie. The first

A WOMAN OF ALEXANDRIA.

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thing that strikes a stranger on entering Alexandra is the black policeman in his white gloves. "Said England unto Pharaoh, I must make a cop of you," and marvellously has she done it. There is a quiet dignity about those Egyptian policemen that could not be excelled by the bobbies on Piccadilly. And the Egyptian "copper" regulates the traffic at the crossings in Alexandra as if he had been educated at Mansion House corner. The next thing a stranger discovers in Alexandra is that he is in financial distress. I do not refer to the expensiveness of the country, though goodness knows it is a dear place to live in, but to the currency muddle. If Mr. Bryan, late presidential candidate of the anti-gold party in the United States, would only come to Egypt, he would find there a silver question that might well stagger him. Now that the Soudan has been recaptured I wish the Sirdar would turn his attention to the currency. All the time I was in Egypt I had not the slightest idea what I was paying for anything. In the first place, as in Turkey, they have what they humorously call good money and bad money. In Egypt the coins are nominated "tariff" and "current,"

but how they expect any sane man to distinguish between them I am sure I don't know. I imagine they don't expect it, but playfully count on getting rich through the impenetrableness of the mystery. The "current" coins and the "tariff" coins are of the same denomination, but "tariff" coins are double the value of the same coin "current." As no coin has any intelligible mark upon it by which its value may be estimated, all a stranger knows is that he is being ruined, without seeing exactly how he is to prevent it. There is on the larger silver coins a cabalistic mark, which resembles an American spread eagle having a fit. This hieroglyphic nightmare, they tell me, is Turkish, and means "God save the Sultan." I think I could amend the phrase by substituting another word for "save." In order to help out the English-speaking interloper, some traders have issued a card which contains fac-similes of the different coins. As these reproductions are the actual size of the coins themselves, you may, by placing a piece of money over the card, and slipping it from one picture to another until it fits, find out, by reading in English the legend at the top, what the value of the coin is. It is

interesting to see a party of tourists newly arrived, shopping in Alexandra or Cairo. They cling despairingly to these cards and ask the shopkeeper kindly to point out what particular coin he wants for the particular thing they think of purchasing. If the coin selected seems too large, the tourists shake their heads and move on. The shopkeepers always exact "tariff" coinage when you purchase an article, invariably, probably through inadvertence, giving you the change in "currency," and the unfortunate victim does not know the difference until he tries to palm off the "currency" on some other shopkeeper at its face value. I suppose England has a big enough force in Egypt to reform this currency if she turned the whole army on the problem; but she leaves it alone, perhaps wisely, because the Egyptians themselves, having got the key to the riddle, might resent interference in the conundrum at which they keep all nations guessing; a riddle never solved by the stranger.

I think myself that the Sphinx must have had something to do with the coinage. Perhaps the Sphinx was really the original mint, and the question it asked, which no one could answer,

was — "Guess the value of this coin?" It may be that the real reason the English leave the Egyptian currency alone is because they know their own pounds, shillings, and pence, and half-crowns and two-shilling pieces are just as bewildering to the foreigner. Still, English currency is not complicated by having two coins of the same name and size, one of which is half the value of the other. That's what adds pandemonium to the natural perplexities of the Egyptian financial nomenclature.

I found to my chagrin that I was a little late getting into Egypt, and regretted that I had not started sooner for that ancient country. When I learned that the pyramids had been up two thousand years before the first Pharaoh came to the throne, and that the first Pharaoh did his little share in muddling up the coinage some six thousand years before the Christian era, I felt that any remark I had to make would be considered too late for an up-to-date daily paper. It is discouraging to think how many jokes there are current to-day which originated about eight thousand years before Pharaoh tried his own practical jest on the Israelites, letting them go and tying a string to them so

POMPEY'S PILLAR, ALEXANDRIA.

that he could pull them back. Out West, when a man tells an ancient story, the assembled company are apt to break forth into song to this effect:

In the days of old Rameses, are you on?
In the days of old Rameses, are you on?
In the days of old Rameses that story had paresis,
Are you on, are you on, are you on?

You can't travel about in Egypt without coming upon some ancient pleasantry that has been re-created and made new in the American papers. For instance, the moment you land at Alexandra there is Pompey's pillar. We are told it is not called after Pompey the Great, but after a certain prefect of the same name in the time of Diocletian. This is quite evidently the origin of the saying that the plays were not written by Shakespeare, but by another man of the same name.

Cairo is the Chicago of the East. It is an upstart modern town, scarcely a thousand years old. Some of the inhabitants tell you that their great great great ancestors might have bought Cairo for a pair of sandals at one time, but neglected to do it. The English occupa-

tion does not seem to have added any ancient flavour to the place. When the soldiers get an afternoon off, they delight in hiring a two-horse carriage, which they pack with as many of themselves as it will hold, and drive at a great pace through the narrow, crooked streets of old Cairo, scattering the foot-passengers about, and singing quite appropriately at the top of their voices, "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road."

An exceedingly modern narrow-gauge railway has been constructed on the Nile side of the highway from Cairo to the pyramids, and by and by they expect to have an elevator up the centre of the great pyramid to the top, with, probably, an aerial wire contrivance suspended from one summit to another. One thing, however, that never changes, and has been complained of by travellers since the time of Pharaoh, and doubtless, if we only knew it, was the cause of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, for they are the people who like to get value for their money, is the clamorous exactions of the Arabs around the foot of the pyramids and the Sphinx. Pharaoh, powerful as he was, made no impression on these brigands, but Mark Twain did. Every tattered

CLIMBING THE PYRAMIDS.

villain who has a camel to let and wants you to ride on it at any price from ten cents to a dollar, cries to you, "He Marky Twain; he Marky Twain; this camel he Marky Twain." As there is no reason to doubt the veracity of these people, Mark Twain must have put in about six months riding around the pyramids, on every camel, old and young, in the desert.

I don't see that the English can leave Egypt for a long time to come, because there are many impositions to rectify. For instance, the ancient sheik, who pretends to have a claim on the pyramids, charges people fifty cents for the right to ascend, whereas he ought to be made to pay that much at least to the visitor who is foolish enough to try the climb. What is needed at the base of the pyramids is a Maxim gun in a state of eruption accurately aimed at these savage pirates. The Mahdi was an officer and a gentleman compared with them. Still it is a great pleasure to visit the pyramids, and lie down in the warm sand to look at them, allowing these tattered Arabian knights to waste their time and their breath in trying to get you to do things which you absolutely refuse to do; neither going up the pyramids

on the outside, nor down to the vaults in the inside.

Besides the English occupation in Egypt, there is also the American occupation. The American occupation consists in mixing weird American drinks, and the American who thus occupies himself is one of the most deservedly popular men in Cairo. Officers who have sampled his decoctions tell me that he makes a whiskey cocktail with a rim of crusted sugar around the glass that does much to mitigate the heat of the climate in Cairo.

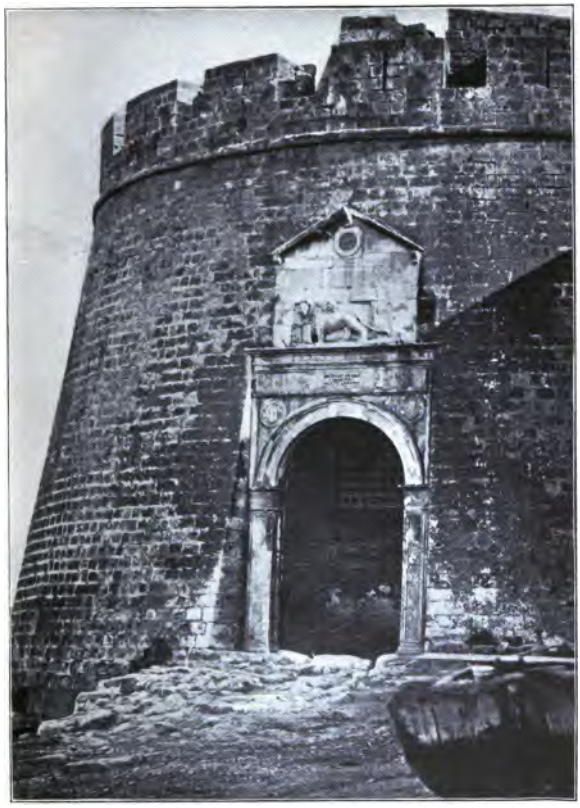
One great advantage of going to Egypt is that a man learns there is no such thing as Egyptian tobacco. They do not seem to grow tobacco in Egypt at all, but the factories make up tobacco which comes from Turkey into cigarettes which they call Egyptian, selling these to unsophisticated persons like myself for high prices. Thus you hear people say that they do not care for Turkish tobacco, but are fond of the Egyptian variety.

The only thing that is cheap in Egypt is sand, and curiously enough, this is just what the Egyptian troops lacked up to the time of the English occupation, and thus the Egyptians

were thrashed by whosoever took the trouble to send an expedition against them. All this is now changed, and the Gippies fight in a manner that would please Mulvaney himself. The Egyptian troops are a smart-looking body of men, and as you see a company of them swinging through the streets of Cairo with a mahogany-coloured band at their head, they have all the appearance of winners. As I stood aside to let them go by, the band was gaily playing the "Washington Post March," the oldest country in the world pounding away at the latest tune of the newest one, all of which goes to show, as everybody says, that the earth is getting smaller and smaller, for it would be hard to imagine ancient Pharaoh marching toward the Red Sea to the strains of "Yankee Doodle."

We sailed north from Egypt to the island of Cyprus, and sighted it early in the morning. The *Creole Prince* had on board a British official and his family who were returning to Cyprus, and intended landing at Baffa, the Paphos of ancient history. But where a steamer intends to land a passenger, and where that passenger will actually land, is not necessarily the same

thing in this region. Many of the islands of the Mediterranean have been carelessly constructed so far as harbours are concerned. I don't know that I am geologically accurate in stating that Malta was evidently the last island to be formed, because the excellency of its harbour accommodation shows that the mistakes made in the architecture of other islands taught a lesson in insular outline. The towns on the southern coast of Cyprus have no harbours, so to speak, and a steamship must lie off to the open and transact its business by means of small boats. As the Mediterranean in this quarter is not always on its good behaviour, communication with the land is not without difficulty. Arriving opposite the town where the official party hoped to disembark, it was soon evident that no one could get ashore that day unless he put on a diving suit and walked along the bottom. So the steamer was compelled to skirt along the coast for forty miles or more until it rounded a point which gave some shelter from the western wind, coming to anchor off Limasol. Here with great difficulty the party got into the rising and falling feluccas that had put off for them from



MOORISH TOWER, FAMAGOSTA, CYPRUS.

port. The heroine of the occasion was the two-year-old baby, who quite evidently thought this disembarking great fun, got up for her special benefit, an opinion which was not shared by her parents.

We had a pleasing panorama all day of the island of Cyprus, with its lofty mountain range approaching at one point seven thousand feet in height, the low land around the shore looking for the most part uncultivated, houses or villages being few and far between. All in all, Cyprus does not appear to be a lucrative possession for England, the only great advantage being that cigarettes are passable and cheap, thus mitigating, in a measure, the loneliness of an enforced residence on the island.

Leaving Larnaka at night, we were off Beyrout, the commercial capital of Syria, in the early morning. The squalid appearance so much in evidence in most Eastern cities is here invisible from the sea. Beyrout rises terrace above terrace from the Mediterranean, occupying an amphitheatre of hills somewhat after the fashion of Genoa. The houses are, for the most part, light in tint, with tiled roofs of the reddest colour, many of the buildings being

of imposing size and admirable architecture, while behind the city, the vivid green of the Lebanon mountains forms a most picturesque background, capped with snow of dazzling whiteness; a brilliant contrast of startling vividness. The picture is one well qualified to be a companion to that of Naples, the deep-blue margin of the Mediterranean being the foreground of each striking panorama. Even a nearer acquaintance does not entirely dissipate the charm that hangs over Beyrout.

Here, for the first time in our trip, we came under the authority of the genial Turk. He owns the town, although he has done nothing toward making the place what it is. The principal buildings have foreign proprietors; the fine carriage-road to Damascus was constructed over the mountains by a French company; another French company built the new railroad which now connects the two cities. Beyrout owes its water-works, with an aqueduct nine miles long, to English capital. All that the Turk does is to stand at the gates and demand tribute, and he gets it too. I am told that he used to be reasonably civil in his exactions, but since the war with Greece the Turk is badly

BEYROUT.

afflicted with what is called in the West swelled head. He seems to think that he defeated England at the same time he overcame the Greeks, which belief has perhaps a spice of truth in it. Anyhow, he is now as arrogant as a successful novelist.

On landing at Beyrout there was a rigid examination of passports, and those of us who wished to travel in the interior of Syria were compelled to take out a Turkish document called a teskeri, which is covered with hieroglyphics on one side, while the other side is stamped and written on by the various officials through whose hands it has to pass until it looks like a war-map gone crazy. Every time an official stamps the teskeri, and bestows his lightning-struck autograph upon it, there is a fee to be paid; and if you go from one place to another without letting the officials know, you are fined, with a chance of getting into prison, as well. At the point of departure your destination is written on the back of the document, and if you go anywhere else you suffer various pains and penalties. Turkey makes no allowance for a changeable-minded traveller.

Turkey never makes a distinction between

an honest man and a rogue; in fact, the favour of the officials seems rather to incline toward the latter. They have an admiration for a man who endeavours to cheat them. Here is the pathetic story of an honest man and a rogue who left the steamship *Creole Prince* with the intention of going to Damascus together. Both of these individuals smoked cigarettes, and the honest man had bought a packet in Cairo which numbered a hundred pieces. The rogue, *per contra*, had purchased his tobacco in two-ounce packets in London, before leaving, not knowing that in Malta the same kind of tobacco could be purchased for about half the price. The rogue allows himself two ounces of fine Virginia tobacco each day, which he makes up into cigarettes; he does not care for Turkish tobacco, and invariably declines to smoke it unless compelled to. Tobacco in Turkey is villainously dear and villainously bad, all that is worth smoking being exported, and the Turk, having the traveller at his mercy within the Sultan's dominions, compels him to pay high prices and put up with an inferior class of goods. At a Turkish port it is not a question of paying duty and getting in what tobacco

you prefer, for the Turk does not allow the importation of foreign tobacco in any circumstances whatever. The rogue, learning this, determined to smuggle sufficient Virginia tobacco to last him as far as Damascus and back, with a surplus to be used in that ancient city. The honest man took with him his hundred cigarettes, but had no intention of smuggling. When the two landed in a small boat on the quay at Beyrout, on which is situated the custom-house, it was raining heavily and each was enveloped down to the heels in long waterproof coats, which assist in the concealing of tobacco, stowed away in an every-day suit.

Asked by the Turkish customs official whether he had any tobacco or not, the honest man replied that he had a hundred cigarettes, whereupon he opened his handbag and produced the packet. The officer took the box of cigarettes, made a thorough search of the honest man's effects, found nothing more, and so turned to the rogue.

"Have you any tobacco?" he asked.

"No," replied the rogue, "I don't smoke."

"Any cigarettes or cigars?"

"Certainly not; I loathe tobacco."

"Take off that overcoat."

The waterproof being removed at this command, the Turk slowly walked around the man, looking over him as he did so, like a critical purchaser who had some intention of buying the article, and wanted to be sure he was not being cheated. Coming close in front of the knave, who had remained in one position like a marble statue, the Turk said, sharply:

"Turn out this pocket," indicating the one on the right-hand side of the Norfolk jacket. Immediate result, discovery of two two-ounce packets of Virginia tobacco. The Turk placed them one on top of the other on a table near by.

"Now this pocket," he said; two two-ounce packets. The breast pocket, one two-ounce packet.

"Unbutton your coat;" the inside pocket; two packets.

"This trousers pocket;" one packet.

"The other trousers pocket;" one packet.

"The hip pocket;" three packets; being considered an exceptionally safe receptacle.

"Would you like me to undress?" asked the victim.

BRIDGES OVER THE RIVER, NEAR BEYROUT.

"No," replied the Turk; "this will do, I think."

On the table was a pound and a half of the finest Virginia, and what follower of the Prophet smoked it, the knave does not know to this day, for that was the last he ever saw of this tobacco. Being caught thus red-handed, as it were, the rogue expected a fine of at least a thousand dollars. Then the just and the unjust were haled into an inner room, in which sat an official evidently of higher rank than the expert individual who had so infallibly spotted every ounce of tobacco on the rascal's person. The superior official listened with frowning brow to the tale of flagrant dishonesty recited by his subordinate. After due meditation, he gave his verdict: Six mejedehs each; a mejedeh being a silver coin about the size of an American silver dollar, worth eighty cents.

"Allah have mercy on me, and the Prophet come to my rescue," exclaimed the honest man, with quite pardonable indignation. "Am I, who at once exhibited my hundred cigarettes, to be treated the same as a villain on whose person a concealed tobacco warehouse was discovered?"

"Precisely the same," replied the official. "You are not allowed to bring tobacco into this country."

In fact both officers seemed to look upon the honest person as a man of no class whatever, who had not given them a run for their money. So, to the amazement of the rogue, they handed him back two packets, the covers of which they broke, making this bestowal apparently as a token of admiration for the stalwart way in which he had lied, looking them straight in the eyes as he did so, contrary to the general belief regarding a foresworn person. Thinking that perhaps it was as well to treat both alike, they offered the honest man a few dozen of his cigarettes. He sternly refused. Whereupon the Turk shrugged his shoulders and put them back in the packet again.

This true tale has two sequels, both of which contain some element of humour. The honest man, angry at his treatment, which he denounced as uncivilised, as if anything civilised was to be expected of the Turk, refused to continue his journey and said he would not set foot again in the Turkish Empire. The rogue pointed out earnestly that if they returned to

the *Creole Prince* they would be the laughing-stocks of the passengers for the rest of the voyage. The honest man, however, did not fear the ridicule of his fellows, having in his possession a clear conscience. Thus arguing they returned together to the vessel. Luckily, all the passengers were ashore, and by this time the just anger of the honest man had somewhat cooled down. He now saw no reason for denying himself the giddy delights of Damascus merely because he had been treated unfairly by a set of Turkish officials. He therefore told the rogue that as there was still time to get the train that evening, he was willing to proceed with the journey. Rejoiced at this, the rogue went down to his stateroom and collected another ten packets of tobacco from his ample store. Wearing knickerbockers very baggy at the knees, the rogue put five packets in each trouser leg, and walked up and down before the mirror to see if they were noticeable. He turned all his pockets inside out, took ostentatiously in his hand the two broken packets that had been given him by the customs, and passed again the rigid investigator, who smiled genially when he saw the linings of the pockets dangling

outwards. Thus did twenty ounces of prime American tobacco, more excellent than anything they can grow in Turkey, enter that empire unespied by the watch-dog of the customs, and the blue smoke thereof is probably still hovering about the mountains of Lebanon and over the ancient city of Damascus.

The second sequel came later. On returning to Beyrout the honest man made complaint regarding his treatment by the customs official. This complaint, curiously enough, did not go to any department of the government, but to a private company which owns the tobacco monopoly of Turkey. The head of this company, stationed in Beyrout, treated both rogue and honest man with a courtesy that was charming. He sent down to the wharf for the officer who had looted the two, and that individual came up with terror on his countenance. The trembling man made two statements which were erroneous. First he said the honest man had threatened to strike him, whereas it was the rogue who kindly offered to throw him into the harbour. Then he alleged that the fine had been but four mejedehs each, so it at once became evident that, of the nine dollars

AN AVENUE IN BAALBEC.

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and sixty cents collected, three dollars and twenty cents had been stolen by some one connected with the customs. The tobacco and the cigarettes were alleged to have been forwarded to Damascus, and so they were not returned, but the four mejedehs each, which had come into the possession of the company, were most politely given back to the honest man and the rogue alike.

It was alleged by those who knew the ways of Turkish officials, that both honest man and rogue would have some trouble in getting out of Beyrout, as the customs collect both import and export duties. This, however, proved not to be the case. The customs man, for whom trouble had been made, seemingly bore no resentment, and when the rogue finally bade farewell to Beyrout this official smiled all over his face, and held out his hand in comradeship, as if he recognised that two scoundrels had met, and that, all in all, the Western rogue had somewhat the better of it.

The railway from Beyrout to Damascus, seventy miles long, zigzags up and then down the mountains of Lebanon. It does not take the mountain straight, as do most of the rail-

ways funiculaire in Switzerland, but runs angle-ways up the side until it comes to a level spot, then the train stands there until the engine is switched to the other end of the train, when it cog-wheels itself up to another level, and so on. The top of the pass is five thousand feet above the sea-level. There are two trains a day, one in the morning and one at night. My companion and myself, with our dragoman, took the night train, as we desired to put in a long day at Baalbec, which is, with the well-known exception of Mark Twain's horse, the finest ruin in Syria. Equipped with the voluminous ignorance which I always use when travelling, I had supposed on leaving London that I was approaching a mild and balmy summer climate. I had read all my life of sunstrokes and thirst in the desert, but never heard of anybody being frozen to death. As no one took interest enough in me to pass on a little information, I went up to Baalbec arrayed in summer garments. It was all right when we left Beyrout, for we were then in the land of palms, and our train at the beginning passed through groves of orange-trees laden with their golden fruit. A warm rain was falling when we drew out of the

station at Beyrout in the pitch darkness, but before we were many hours *en route* white patches were blown against the window-panes, and the suddenly increasing cold showed us we were approaching the Arctic regions. Very soon we had risen above the region of soft snow, and it now beat against the window-panes like hail, while the crunch of the wheels outside the car reminded me of the noise a train makes in Northern Canada in the depth of winter. A man learns much by travel, and we were now finding out that the mountains of Lebanon toward their summits are no place for summer clothing. We were just able to crawl stiffly out of our carriage at Muallakah, the summit station, where at midnight we met the westward coming train from Damascus.

CHAPTER VI.

Baalbec, the Superb — Origin of the City — The Founding of the First Water Company — History Made on the Spot — Temples Galore — The Historian of Baalbec — Some Interesting Literary Extracts — The Tower of Babel Question Settled at Last.

BITTERLY did I regret, during the trip, that Baalbec had not been wiped off the face of the earth while the earthquakes were about it. Snowing had ceased, — it was too cold for snow, — but a wild blizzard from the north cavorted across the plains and enjoyed itself riotously, much more than we were doing, in spite of the fact that we were wrapped up in blankets and quilts kindly loaned us by the Arab proprietor of the hotel at El Muallakah. We fastened down the curtains of the carriage and expected every now and then to go off over the plains like a balloon, so fierce was the storm. And yet they must have some decent weather in that locality, because the principal industry

DISTANT VIEW OF BAALBEC.

seemed to be grape-growing. There were no fences or hedges around the fields, and the grape-vines were trained along the ground, the big bunches of white fruit nestling in the sand. And thus it comes about at the hotels where grapes are served, you see a man who knows the country hold the bunch of grapes above a bowl, pouring water over them, to remove some at least of the Syrian soil from the berry. Little straw huts dotted the landscape, in which shivered the vineyard watchers, armed with long guns. These huts were not big enough for a man to stand upright in, and so the watchers reclined on their stomachs and shivered so much that their aim must have been slightly unsteady, although we did not test the accuracy of their firing by attempting to take in the grapes from the cold. As we approached the ancient city the weather moderated, the sun came out, and life was worth living again. Baalbec lies in a sort of cup, or rather a saucer, surrounded by high mountains. The broad valley, in the centre of which the ruins are situated, has a reddish surface, caused by oxide of iron in the soil. The origin of Baalbec, like that of Jeames, is wrapped in mystery. It stands 3,800 above

the sea, says the guide-book, and 4,500 says the encyclopædia, but judging by the weather it was 10,000 feet high the day we were there.

It is almost impossible to do justice to the ruins of Baalbec. The relative merits of the ancient Greek and Roman as compared with the modern Turk are here brought into startling contrast, the magnificent ruins on the one hand, and the squalor of the Turkish village of Baalbec on the other. The government exacts eighty cents from every one who enters the ruins, but it does absolutely nothing to preserve them. A miniature river of clear, sparkling water runs winding through the place, turning here and there a small mill for the grinding of corn. Insignificant as the stream is, if it had not been there, Baalbec would never have been built.

As there are extant no definite records regarding Baalbec in the early ages, this leaves a man a fair chance of airing his own opinions on the subject, without running the risk of being contradicted. At this spot there met and joined two great caravan routes, one coming from Damascus, in the south, and the other from Palmyra, to the east. From this point west-

ward the two caravan routes were identical until the Mediterranean Sea was reached at Tripoli. Whether going east or west the great necessity for a caravan was water. The caravans from Damascus would not be so badly off for the fluid, because they came to this place through ravines, down which streams flowed from the mountains, but the caravans from Palmyra could meet no water-supply from the time they left that city until they came within sound of Ras el Ain, for so Baalbec's stream is named. Then, again, the caravans from Palmyra must have been more numerous than those from Damascus, because Palmyra gathered to herself all the caravans from Bagdad, Babylon, Nineveh, and other important centres of the farther east. Palmyra herself had grown rich on supplying water, and this city was undoubtedly the model on which our present water companies were formed. The water from the springs of the oasis on which Palmyra stood was farmed out at exorbitant prices to thirsty caravans, and any man who had a share in the springs of Palmyra was certain to become one of the millionaires of the town. Palmyra honoured men who successfully brought great caravans to that city across

the desert from the east, and erected statues to them along the main thoroughfare, which was doubtless the result of gratitude to these caravan captains for bringing victims to the office of the water-works. It must, then, have occurred to some Palmyrian, who had a share in the water monopoly or wished to have one, to head off the caravans somewhere else and have another chance of attracting tribute from them, so I imagine a true citizen of Palmyra mounting his camel, going west until he came to Ras el Ain, and there staking out a claim for himself. I have some hope that the first caravan which came along massacred this individual, took what water it needed free, and passed on to the westward, but the history of monopoly shows us that the mere execution of one or two individuals who pretend to own the earth and the water thereon, does not in the least retard the growth of the monopoly, and doubtless, if one man could not secure to himself the waters of this river, a limited liability company did, and thus began the town of Baalbec.

Possibly, as the years went on, the caravan leaders took this exaction as belonging to the natural order of things, and the company prob-

MAUSOLEUM, PALMYRA.

ably put up a tank and looked on itself as a public benefactor. Having exploited the water market for all that it was worth, the new town of Baalbec apparently grew and flourished. The water bailiffs, becoming rich, doubtless built fine houses, and ultimately palaces, and then the yearning for some other method of depleting the stranger, in addition to the water-supply, most naturally rose in their minds. I should surmise that first an era of temple building began. These water-works people must have seen that nothing is so universal as religion, and perhaps it struck somebody that it would not be a bad idea to make Baalbac a sort of cosmopolitan city of worship. The magnificent temple of the Sun, standing next door to an almost equally magnificent temple of Jupiter, shows that the people of Baalbec had no bigoted notions with regard to any particular kind of religion. And as Baalbec stood ready to furnish water to all comers, it may have had equal willingness to cater to all opinions on the subject of religion. This idea is strengthened in my mind by the fact that the Druses were the most powerful tribe in the neighbourhood of Baalbec, as, indeed, they are to-day. The Druses are a

tribe who make no attempt to proselytise anybody else, and they do not possess ambitions toward martyrdom, for they instruct their people to conform with any religion amongst which they may find themselves, each, however, remaining true in his heart to his own faith. Now a water monopolist would naturally have no religion of his own, and being free also from the trammels of conscience, it might have occurred to him that it wouldn't be a bad idea to erect temples in Baalbec for every kind of belief then extant, and make the city, as it were, a free-for-all place of worship, no sect interfering with any other sect, and each sect having its own palatial temple. As the habit of the day in all other cities was persecution, the strongest religious body in the place oppressing all the rest, this go-as-you-please idea in Baalbec must have become very popular, and must have attracted rich citizens from various parts of the world, who thereupon erected mansions and palaces in the suburbs of Baalbec, and as the climate is delightful for the greater part of the year, as water was plentiful, and the whole district around fertile, Baalbec must have been one of the most charming cities in the world for

residential purposes. I intend to offer this contribution toward historical accuracy to the next edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," but in case the publishers of that work should not use it I now give it public expression. There is this advantage, my statements cannot be successfully contradicted even by the most profound of Eastern scholars.

We entered into Baalbec through tunnels extending the whole length of the town; arched tunnels built of rough stone, finished off in some parts, and left rough in others. There are two tunnels, one under each side of the city, running parallel, with a connecting tunnel between, making the whole form one gigantic letter H. These subterranean thoroughfares are thirty feet high, and thirty-two feet wide. Archæologists have been puzzled to know their use, some guessing that they were dungeons for the confinement of prisoners; others that they were barracks for the Roman soldiers. They were, however, no puzzle to me. I recognised them at once as the underground railway system of Baalbec. Any one who has ever stood on the platform at Gower Street Station, in London, will find no difficulty in coming to

a conclusion regarding the use of these subterranean passageways. Doubtless the loops at each end have been destroyed by frequent earthquakes, but, when these were in place, no deep-thinking man could hesitate for a moment in pronouncing this to be the inner circle railway of Baalbec.

Of the magnificent Temple of the Sun, six or seven superb columns remain standing, and this in spite of the fact that the Arabs chopped away the stone at the base of each column, as a woodman cuts down a tree, in order to make bullets of the lead that joined the stones. Each column is seventy-five feet high, and is composed of three stones, the height, including cornice with entablature, is eighty-nine feet, therefore these six columns tower above the ruined city, and form a striking landmark for a long time before the traveller reaches Baalbec. The Temple of Jupiter did not fare so badly as the Temple of the Sun. Its walls are still intact, and it is counted the most perfect ruin to be found in Syria. It was surrounded by forty-six columns, some of them fluted, and nine of these now remain. It is perhaps now too late to expose the imposture of the priests,

TEMPLE OF THE SUN, BAALBEC.

but for ways that are dark and tricks that were vain, they were certainly peculiar. The statue of Jupiter in the temple was consulted by the people as an oracle, and gave answers to their questions. Ruin has now laid bare the secret passages by which the priests crept in the darkness under the floor of the temple, up through a trap-door, and into the statue of Jupiter, which may account for the replies of this piece of sculpture. The largest building in Baalbec is the Pantheon, the temple of all the gods. It is about four hundred feet square, and its walls are still standing practically as originally built. From the number of niches and recesses in the walls, it seems to have been enriched with many statues, and doubtless great finds of valuable marble would result if the Turks gave permission to excavate the courts of this temple. I believe, however, that the German Emperor has overcome the Sultan's reluctance in this matter, and that a German society is now digging up the courts of Baalbec. If there is anything valuable underneath, I should say that the Germans are reasonably sure to find it.

One cannot but admire the masonry of Baalbec. Mortar is nowhere used, but lead bolts

join the stones together, which lead has mostly been extracted by the Arabs. So perfect is the workmanship that even where the largest stones are concerned, the joints are so perfectly fitted that it is impossible to insert the blade of a penknife between any two of the stones.

No account of Baalbec would be complete which did not contain some mention of its local historian. Michael M. Alouf was our guide through the ruins. He is a young man who speaks English excellently, and has evidently received a good education. His father is the custodian of the ruins to whom the Turkish mejedehs must be paid. Michael has written a history of Baalbec which can be had in English, French, or German, and the author has received compliments for his work from the Société de Géographie of France, the American Geographical Society, and other learned bodies. No English-speaking person should be without this little book. The author told me that a new edition was about to be published, and that, as in the present version some inaccuracies had crept, he was receiving assistance in the preparation of the new volume from a native

Englishman. I cannot help thinking this is a pity, because the volume now in my possession is something too precious to be parted with. We like the signatures of authors on their books, and any one who gets a copy of the earlier edition, will get the autograph of the writer of it, because the book has been set up in Beyrout by people who evidently knew nothing of the English language, and so Mr. Alouf has, with his own hand, made various corrections, which, while perhaps adding to the clarity of the language, certainly detract from its humour. For instance, on page 26, the unrevised version, speaking of Elijah, said: "This confounded prophet came to Baalbec," but the amended edition tells us that "this prophet came to Baalbec and confounded the priests of Baal," which, while more complimentary to the prophet, certainly lacks the spice of the sentence as first printed. But no phrase of mine will do so much to induce the reader to appreciate this book as extracts from it. In concluding his preface, Mr. Alouf says: "For fear that my history would annoy the readers, I have tried to make it as short as possible, but at the same time interesting. But, at any

rate, the reader, who knows my goodwill, will excuse, I hope, my young age of twenty years, and the difficulties which I had to overcome in writing in a language, though very dear to us, yet a foreign one."

Describing the route to the cedars of Lebanon, he says: "At 5 minutes to the north of that village flows an abundant, delicious fountain, that refreshes the thirsty traveller who was so much troubled by the long way. The road which he crossed after leaving Ainata is hard acclivity in form of a zigzag; every now and then, however, he meets with pleasant and picturesque objects that repair and indemnify his forces."

After the traveller has used up some more of his forces in climbing a mountain, Mr. Alouf thus graphically describes the view: "From that high place to the east you can discover Baalbec in its charming position, like a queen sitting honourably and quietly on its beautiful and green throne." And on reaching the top, where a glimpse of the Mediterranean is to be had, he says: "The scenery is delightful and enchanting. The sea from far looks like a vast beautiful prairie, and Besherri, with the

CEDARS OF LEBANON.

mountains that surround it from all directions, made the view so nice."

He thus describes the cedars themselves: "Its wood is very strong, and has a deal of tar; its smell is fragrant, and neither can the moth gnaw it, nor dampness injure it. . . . The Bible boasts in its lumber, elevation, grandeur, and utility for the masts, building, and statues." He touches lightly on the idolatry in the Temple of Venus as "the 'pleasure' which caused among the inhabitants much superstition and effemination."

Returning again to the cedars of Lebanon, Mr. Alouf says: "David and Solomen used it, the first for his palace, and the other for the temple of Jerusalem. Zerubbable used it also in building the second temple. The historian Josephus says that Herod the Great used it in building the temple he erected. Even the cross of our Saviour is thought to have been of this wood; a fact that shows us enough its honour. Others say also that the roof of the church of Resurrection in Jerusalem, and that of the house of the Holy Virgin have of the cedar wood. When Solomon intended to build a temple to the Lord,

Hiram, king of Tyre, made many rafts of the cedar wood, which he attached to the vessel and sent them to the king to Jerusalem. There were then many forests of it in Lebanon, and Solomon, availing himself of that, sent 80,000 men to bring for him cedar wood from there. But now there are only five forests, the greatest and most beautiful of which is found near Becheri, of which we are speaking now.

"It contains more than 400 trees, of which 12 are the greatest, and the oldest, while all the others are much smaller.

"Mr. Graham, the famous traveller, measured the extent of the shade which the branches of every one of 21 trees cast forward, and concluded that their diameters are from 22 to 40 feet. The circumference of the largest is 20 feet. People visit them from all parts of the world, from Asia as well as from Europe and America. There they contemplate things which are worthy to rejoice the sight and charm the eye. The Christians of the East consider this forest as a holy place, and that is why they erected there a small church.

"The traveller is always anxious to know

new ways and other paths to return to Baalbeck than those by which he has come. He has first to pass the valley of Ainata by the west side; after an hour he gets to Yammouni that has its nices position near a little lake. Many fountain flow froem there abundantly. The inhabitants say that Yammouni has forty fountains as an emblem of the forty martyrs who were killed in that village, as they suppose. The great fountain is to the west side of the village; it flows from the height of a mountain, and forms a magnificent water-fall, and flows down raoring to a far distance, and turns many mill-stones. In Autumn the its water, lake loses one quarter of but in Summer and Spring it overflows to its enormous bulk."

Mr. Alouf tells some stories in his volume which are exceedingly interesting. Here is one about the ambassador's pigeons, which struck me as very ingenious, so much so that I stole it, and then sold the looted goods to magazines in America and England for enough money to pay my expenses to Baalbec and back. Thus do unscrupulous, so-called authors make one hand wash the other. Like all pla-

giarists, I carefully concealed the fact that I got the germ of the story from Michael M. Alouf, but now, when it is too late for him to get out an injunction against me, I cheerfully acknowledge the source of my alleged inspiration. Here, then, is the real story of the pigeons :

" Soon Ismail prince of Baalbek intended to have possession of Damascus in 1,238; he began then to have his preparations for war. Damascus had then Omar son of king Ayoub the young nephew of Ismail as a governor; Ayoub who was then at Naboulus, knew secretly his uncle's intention, he then sent to Baalbek a phisicien, called Saadeddin in whom he had full confidence with some pigeons, which were then used to convey the news, to let him know all what he could discover. Ismail knew the motives that brought this phisicien to come and visit him, he invited him and shewed him much friendship and kindness, then stole from him the pigeons of Naboulus, and put other pigeons instead of them. The phisicen did not perceive the fraud thinking that these pigeons were the same ones he brought with him, he wrote to Ayoub and told him that 'your uncle Ismail is gathering his army and getting ready

TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEC.

to walk against Damascus, thereupon he tied the letter to one of its doves and let it fly away it flew for some time in the sky and came back to the city with the letters which so to speak Ismail intercepted.' Then Ismail wrote false letters by the name of the phisicien in which he told Ayoub that 'your uncle Ismail is gathering his army to come to your help and fight against your enemies, he then sent it with the pigeons of Naboulus.' So Ismaïl could conveniently finish all his preparations, and walk with Shirkoh, prince of Homs against Damascus, they attacked it, and besieged its fortress, which Omar son of Ayoub was defending. When Ayoub heard of this news, he felt sorry for the loss of time and soon walked with his army toward Damascus to help his son, but on his way he heard that Damascus was taken, and his son was defeated so he went back home."

Baalbec has had to suffer much from invasions, and also from earthquakes and even floods, which seems strange in such a dry country. Mr. Alouf graphically gives an account of one of these inundations, which must have been similar to the disaster which, I have

taken for granted, caused the building of the Tower of Babel.

"In May 10th 1,318, an impeteous flood coming from the east overwhelmed the city and destroyed it. It was then divided into two torrents; the first one coming from the east wind rushed down against the ramparts which in vain tried to pull down, but passed them on; the other one that was stronger, coming from the north-east concentrated fully on a part of the ramparts, made a hole of about 30 yds, its depth was then 4 yds, it carried away a tower of 12 yards square sound and safe to a distance of 400 yards, as some historiens say. The water filled the city; 1,500 houses were ruined including the great mosque, 131 shops, 44 orchards, 13 schools, 17 furnaces, 4 aqueducts and 11 mills. The number of people who died in that calamity was 194.

"Tamelan (Timour-lank) the Tartar, after his coming to Aleppo with his infernal terror went to Damascus passing by Baalbek in 1,401. It was in vain that its inhabitants presented themselves before him begging to spare their city; but Tamerlan listened to no one he sent there his army, plundered it completely. In

1,516 when the ottoman sultan Selim I took possession of Syria, Baalbek at that time was subdued to him also."

Mr. Ruskin wrote learnedly about the stones of Venice, but they are nothing in size to the stones of Baalbec. The great stone in the quarry just outside the city is seventy-two feet long, fourteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. A man has little idea of the weight of this block until he tries to lift it. I doubt if we have any modern tackle that would stand the strain, and it would take the combined strength of forty thousand men to move the block with such tackle, if we had it. In the ancient walls of the city are several other stones only slightly smaller than this one in the quarry. The question that naturally presents itself to the investigating mind on viewing this monolith, is how did the ancients transport it from quarry to wall? The solution generally preferred by scientists is that an inclined plane and stone rollers were used. If this were the case, a strong causeway of stone, or some such hard and durable material, must have extended from the quarry to the city, otherwise the roller would have sunk in the earth; but of this

causeway no trace remains, therefore it seems unlikely that it was ever built, for, with the more delicate tracery of the pillars practically perfect after all these years, the remains of this stoutly built roadway would surely have been discoverable to-day. My own theory is that those great builders knew much more about science than we do. For many centuries we have merely been rediscovering what China knew thousands of years ago. We are able to-day to reverse the electrical current, making it positive or negative at will; causing it to attract or repel. It seems plausible, then, that the ancients knew how to reverse the attraction of gravitation. No other force that we know of pulls the one way all the time. It is more than likely that the foreman of a quarry, instead of attempting to hitch a hundred thousand men to the block, would say to one of his workers:

"Johnny, the boys are shouting for more brick at the walls; just take this stone down to them, will you?"

Then Johnny would pull the lever that reversed the current of gravitation as far as that stone was concerned, and would gently push it

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THE GREAT STONE, BAALBEC.

down to the wall of the city, asking the masons where they would have it placed.

My next task is to settle the Tower of Babel question, and I am as willing to throw light upon that subject, as upon any of the foregoing. There is a legend to the effect that Baalbec takes its name from Babel, and that here was built the celebrated tower intended to reach to heaven. Then there is the additional fact that confusion of language still exists in the village of Baalbec. The great stones are supposed to have been the foundation of this tower, which seems to indicate that its builders contemplated a reasonably high and solid structure. There is, of course, no inhabitant of Baalbec now old enough to remember the building of the celebrated tower, still, the opinions of the present residents on the subject are, at least, as valuable as those of outsiders, and this is a synopsis of it. Baalbec, as I have said, lies at the bottom of a cup. The waters which supply the city find their exit from this cup through gorges of the mountains. It is quite possible that one of the numerous earthquakes, which make life exciting in this region, tumbled down rocks into this gorge and dammed up the stream. The chances are, then,

that Baalbec woke up one morning and discovered itself surrounded by water, and as the inhabitants had, of course, no boats within the city, and probably little wood of any sort, they may have found it impossible to escape. Thus, before the accumulation of water swept away the barriers in the mountains, the whole plain in which Baalbec is situated may have become a vast lake of fresh water, and probably few of the citizens escaped drowning. Now, as the people of the present day in Baalbec truly say, those who built such a magnificent city were no fools, even though they may not have foreseen a flood. If they wanted to reach heaven (alleged my informant), they would naturally have begun their Tower of Babel, not at the bottom of the valley, but on the top of the nearest high mountain, which would have saved them some thousands of feet of masonry. It was therefore suggested that the Tower of Babel should be built alongside the city to such a height that if a similar flood overtook Baalbec, the inhabitants could fly for safety up this tower. This seems to me a reasonable and sensible deduction, and thus I leave it.

CHAPTER VII.

The Wonderful Druse Tribe — The Druse's Contempt for the Turk — Story of a Hitherto Unrecorded Expedition — Ordering a Fresh Relay of Turks for Slaughtering Purposes — The Druse Religion — A Novel That Saved a Man's Life.

SURROUNDING Baalbec, but principally to the west of it, the highlands are inhabited by a remarkable tribe called the Druses. The chances are that these people are relatives of the British, but be that as it may, the Druses have a strong liking for them. Their origin is in doubt; they themselves think that they came originally from China, and it is rather remarkable that they should know anything about China, for usually the people of Syria are densely ignorant, especially so far as geography is concerned. In appearance they have little in common with the modern Chinese. The Druses are big, fair-haired, stalwart men, with a complexion much whiter than that of the Arab or Turk, and they have an independent swing in

their walk which differs much from the average Eastern person. It is thought by some students of antiquity that the Druses are really descended from the English or the French. It is asserted that a body of Crusaders became detached from the main army, defended themselves as well as they could, but were finally driven to the mountains. There, being tired of a fruitless war, they settled down, and took to themselves spouses from the hill tribes which they joined, somewhat after the manner of the shipwrecked Spanish Armada sailors on the coast of Ireland. The Druses are a most admirable people, extremely hospitable, ready to share their last crust with any stranger who happens along, invariably refusing money for the services they may render a traveller, and they are always fond of a joke. They are about the only people with any comprehension of humour in Syria. Living in the territory of the Turk, they pay neither tribute nor respect to him, and the Turk, up to date, has been quite unable to bring them under the yoke of the empire. I had my first sight of the Druses in Beyrout, and took them for important officials from the way they swaggered around the town, and from the fact that each had

GATE OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER, BAALBEC.

a gun slung over his shoulder, for the Turks allow no one but themselves to carry arms. They pretend not to see the armed Druses, and the latter do not seem particularly to care whether they attract the attention of the Turks or not. If any foreigner enters Turkey with even the harmless necessary revolver, it is taken from him and confiscated. A man we met in Damascus succeeded in getting his revolver and a number of cartridges through, but that was by taking out the inner works of a kodak and placing in the box his pistol surrounded by the cartridges. The Turks are so accustomed to kodaks that they allowed him to pass without question. The Druses, however, do not ask the permission of the Turks to carry their guns, and the Turks keep mum.

About sixty-five thousand Druses inhabit the mountains of Lebanon, and some ten thousand more are found in the Hauran district beyond Damascus. There, too, is located the tribe of Maronites, a large community which numbers, all told, something like one hundred thirty-five thousand. Like the Druses, the Maronites occupy the country on both sides of Damascus, largely inhabiting the mountains of Lebanon.

The Turks promised the Druses the lands of the Maronites, and promised the Maronites the lands of the Druses. They also stirred up ancient enmities between the two peoples, fearing that they would unite and sweep Turkish rule from Syria. The Maronites being largely in excess of the Druses in numbers, the Turks succeeded in persuading them to disarm, and then joined the Druses in attacking them. Naturally the disarmed people suffered heavily. Peace was patched up between the two tribes in the early sixties, but various writers inform us that the ancient enmity between the Druses and the Maronites has continued. I did not find this to be the case. Our dragoman was a Maronite, and he certainly stood high in the esteem of the Druses. By what I could learn from the latter, they are now "on to" the game of the Turk, and the Sultan has moved his thimble-rigging performances farther west, and is playing his little dodge with great success on those simpletons, Russia, England, France, and Italy.

Much happens in the Lebanon mountains that does not get into the papers. A while since the Turks sent an expedition from Beyrout, against the Druses who were becoming

too independent to be bearable. The Turkish battalion disappeared into the valleys of the Lebanon, and for some days there was considerable anxiety concerning them. But at last there appeared at Beyrout a tattered Druse, badly cut up, who said his people had been defeated after a terrible battle, and that the two enemies now occupied positions opposing each other, neither daring to attack. Seeing that the Druses could not withstand the might of the Turkish Empire, he had deserted his comrades, and had come to swear allegiance to the Turk. As a matter of good faith, knowing all the paths of the mountains, he had brought a message from the leader of the Turkish expedition, who asked the commander at Beyrout to send him instantly reinforcements, which this Druse would guide to the place where they were most needed. Another band of soldiers was at once despatched under the guidance of the traitorous Druse. He led them into the mazes of the mountains and up a high valley, where he triumphantly pointed out to them the Turkish flag waving over a large body of men in Turkish uniform. Suddenly the guiding Druse disappeared into the wilderness,

and from all around fire blazed forth on the unfortunate Turks, who thus, too late, realised that they had been trapped. The Druses had taken in the first expedition and wiped them off the face of the earth, not a man escaping, and being still unsatisfied, now that their fighting blood was up, had calmly ordered on another regiment, which they also decimated, just as a hungry man calls for a second helping at a restaurant. After this double victory the Druses thought of going down to Beyrout itself to make things lively and interesting in that town, and it was not fear of the forces they would meet that hindered them, but the fact that so many foreigners lived at Beyrout, some of whom would be sure to get hurt, and thus bring on outside intervention, as had been the case when Napoleon III. sent ten thousand French soldiers to keep the peace in Lebanon about thirty-eight years ago. The Druses, however, forwarded a polite letter to the Turkish commander at Beyrout, requesting him to send larger men next time, as the Turkish uniforms they had captured were of too small a size to be of much use as ready-made clothing for the Druse warriors. Thus it comes that although

TOMB NEAR BAALBEC.

the rich people of Beyrout go up to the mountains of Lebanon in the summer for their health, the Turkish officers have since then come to the conclusion that the mountains are not a suitable health-resort for their soldiers.

A missionary who has spent many years among the Druses gave me some interesting particulars about their religion and habits. He says they are the most difficult people to live amongst in an evangelical way that he has ever had any experience of. Like the inebriate with the champagne, you don't get any forrader with them. They will agree cordially with everything a missionary says; they will join with him in prayer and do everything he wishes, but they stick to their own religion just the same. The faithful are enjoined to conform to whatever religion is dominant around them, but to remain true in their hearts to their own. Thus they will worship with equal complacency in a Mohammedan mosque or a Christian church. They never pray, as they look upon prayer as an impertinence toward the Almighty. They believe in one passionless god who is all-wise, and therefore needs no advice from this earth. They will allow Mohammedan

or Christian to enter their churches, but when a Mohammedan visits them they cease their own form of worship and begin reading the Koran. When a Christian comes, they read the Bible. They do not practise polygamy, but treat women with a respect similar to that in vogue among civilised nations, teaching them to read and write, which every Druse woman is able to do, thus forming a somewhat striking contrast to their Moslem neighbours. They have seven commandments, the first and greatest of which inculcates absolute truth, but that is only between Druse and Druse, for they may lie as much as they like to the outsider; it is not counted against them. They make no attempt to proselyte other people, for they know it would be useless, as the gates of heaven were finally closed something like eight hundred years ago. They believe in one indivisible god, but they have had ten Christs, the last being Hakim, whose full name is El Hakim biamriillah Aboo 'Alee Mansoor, who held the gates of heaven open for thirty-six years, during which time all mankind had a chance of salvation. The gates were at last closed in the year 1020, and it seems rather illogical of the Druses to shut out

everybody born since that time from Paradise. They say that no more Christs will appear to save sinners, but that when Hakim finally returns it will be to conquer the world. Hakim, by the way, who was Caliph of Egypt, seems to have been the worst and most tyrannical ruler that ever reigned even in that much misgoverned country. He became so unbearable at last that his sister arranged for his assassination, which duly came off, to the satisfaction of all the people of Egypt and the surrounding country.

Although the Druses are a warm-hearted, hospitable, free-handed people, yet once their suspicions are aroused they are as cruel as fate, and in war they are relentless, as has been shown more than once. The missionary of whom I speak was one day jogging up to his station in the mountains on a donkey. He lived in Beyrout, and visited the Druses as occasion might require. A friendly member of the tribe met him in a secluded spot, and told him, with fear and trembling, that the Druses had received information which pointed to his being a spy in the employment of the Turkish Government. As the Druses did not

wish to cause him unnecessary anxiety, or hurt his feelings in the least, they had determined to give him no warning of his fate, but to cut his throat quietly that night while he slept. The missionary had not gone too far into the Druse country to retreat, had he been so minded, but as a matter of fact he determined to go on in any case, as he had announced that he would visit them for three days. He knew that, when he got particulars of their suspicions against him, he could easily disprove the charge of treachery toward them, but he knew also that the Druses could execute first and investigate afterward, which knowledge was somewhat discomforting. He met his parishioners near the large tent in which his services were held, and there was nothing in their demeanour to show that they intended to assassinate him, although he noticed that the women seemed rather sorrowful. He greeted them cordially, and was as cordially greeted by them in return, but he gave them no indication of his acquaintance with their murderous intentions toward him. That evening, after holding services, the Druses, men and women, gathered around the central fire in the big tent, and the missionary

A DRUSE GIRL.

told them of a story he had lately been reading, which was Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island." Having roused their curiosity regarding it, they pressed him to relate some of the incidents. He recited from memory, translating the absorbing novel from the original for the Druses, and the missionary was staking his life on the device which saved the newly wedded wife of the caliph, and gave to the world the Arabian Nights' entertainments. A couple of breathless hours passed, and the Druses listened to the recital with absorbed interest. At last the missionary paused, yawned, and said he was tired from his long ride up the mountain, and would go on with the tale next night. He slept peacefully till daylight, his throat uncut. The next night, and the next again he worked off on those interested Druses the well-known serial formula of "to be continued in our next." He left them with the story still unfinished, promising them to complete it when he returned again from Beyrout. From that city he sent them conclusive proof that he was not the traitor they suspected him of being, showing them that he had no more communication with the Turks than was necessary in arranging the

right of domicile. And so to this day he passes among this mountain tribe scathless, giving them, now and then, by word of mouth, free translations of interesting English literature.

CHAPTER VIII.

Damascus in the Early Morning — Bazaars and Workshops — An Arabian Overcoat — Terrors of Carriage Driving — House Interiors — A Game of Horsemanship.

RETURNING to Muallakah from Baalbec, we took the midnight train for Damascus, and arrived on the outskirts of that celebrated city on a dark, cold morning, somewhere about five o'clock. The ride in the train was not as uncomfortable as our former trip had been, for the obliging landlord at Muallakah bestowed on us a couple of mattresses and some blankets, in which we wrapped ourselves, and made a sort of sleeping-car of our compartment. We tumbled sleepily out of the train at Damascus right into the arms of the authorities. I thought at first we were arrested for something, but it appeared they only wished to examine our teskeries, and while one official held a lantern aloft, the other scrutinised that

interesting document. The lantern was then turned upon our faces and persons, and we were looked over very carefully to see if we corresponded with the bill of lading. They seemed to have their doubts about the advisability of letting us pass, but after an animated conversation with our dragoman, they finally, with apparent reluctance, allowed us to go free. Day was breaking, chill and gray, as we got out on the sandy thoroughfare, and there being no carriages at the station, we set out to walk to our hotel. Passing a tremendous barracks on the one hand, and a mosque on the other, we reached the bank of a clear stream and skirted its edge until we came to a bridge, at the other end of which stood our tavern. Here we met, racing for the station with true Eastern dilatoriness, three or four carriages which would reach there half an hour after the train had come in. The hotel was barred like a fortress. Two great doors studded with iron, closed the arched gateway, and after some delay a smaller door in one of the big leaves was unbolted and opened, and we were allowed to enter with suspicion evidently still clinging to us. The wide passage led to an open courtyard, in the centre of which

DAMASCUS AND THE BARRADA RIVER.

played a fountain. We were taken up a winding stair and along a gallery overhanging the courtyard, then into what was veritably a marble palace. The floor and the wainscoting was of white marble veined with a black bordering. We were shown into nice large airy rooms, with beds protected by mosquito-netting. Each room had windows opening after the French fashion, and nice little balconies which overhung the road and faced the river. The first view from this balcony reminded one of a French town, the river being canalised and straight as a ditch, with stone embankments on each side of it, and the immediate buildings were as modern as any in Paris. But beyond arose the sky-piercing columns of the minarets with their conical roofs and circular balconies near the top. As the sun appeared the blind Moedhdhin came out on this lofty gallery and sang in high tones the call to prayer, strolling around and around the minaret as he did so. Blind men are usually chosen for this exalted office, that they may not overlook the courts aud housetops from their elevated situation. Against the deep blue sky in the distance rose the mountains of Lebanon, their tops

covered with snow, and thus at length we realised we were not in Paris in spite of the modern marble hotel, the iron bridge, and the embankments of stone which confined the waters of the running stream.

Keeping along down the stream from our hotel, we came to a broad square, and thence passed out of all modernity into the real ancient renowned metropolis of Damascus, probably the oldest city in the world. The narrow streets were thronged with a variegated jostling crowd, and here and there, towering above them, a stately camel plodded its slow way along, careless on whose toes it trod. On each side of the way, in bazaars entirely open to the street, busy people were making or selling things, or both. There was no deception, everything was done in plain sight, and as you could buy most things fresh from the hands of its manufacturer, you had no trouble about their genuineness. Everything as advertised; any article taken from the shop windows. It seemed an ideal way of trading, direct from the maker to the consumer, without even the intervention of a coöperative store. The din was usually something tremendous, especially in quarters like the copper-

smiths' bazaar, where all sorts of utensils were being beaten out on little anvils from sheets of copper. The street called Straight is wider than one would have expected, and the bazaars there are two stories high. These are selling, rather than manufacturing bazaars, and you can trade on the ground floor or mount up to the wooden gallery, just as you please. The street ends at the door of the great mosque, once so famous, but now like the suburban jerry builder's paradise, filled with heaps of lime, and cut stone, and sand, and all the usual paraphernalia that waits on the erection of a block of houses. Since the fire that nearly destroyed the mosque they have been rebuilding, and apparently do not make very rapid progress with their work.

The weather was so unexpectedly cold that I was compelled to buy additional clothing, and the only thing that seemed at all suitable was an Arabian abbieh, several of which a tall Arab was peddling in the street called Straight. He told my dragoman that it had been constructed by his wife, who lived about twelve miles from Damascus, and when she had about half a dozen of these garments made, he came in and sold them. The price was two and a half mejedehs,

or something over two dollars, and a more serviceable or warmer overcoat I never had in my life. It appeared to be fashioned of one piece of cloth, at least up to date I have been able to find no seam in it. In colour it had broad bands of black and white running perpendicularly, and it was ornamented by an edging of red embroidery. It reached from the neck to the heels and had no sleeves, no buttons, no pockets, and all in all, is a garment I can strongly recommend to any man in the habit of getting inebriated who finds a difficulty in negotiating the ordinary top-coat of commerce. This wonderful article of apparel is as thick and as water-proof as a plank, and the Arabs use it indiscriminately as an overcoat, a night-shirt, and a prayer-rug, all of which purposes it answers admirably. The absence of buttons enables you to wrap it round you as tightly as you please, and it keeps out even the piercing cold of the mountain regions of Syria. This garment, useful as it was, never took kindly to me, and became evidence against me later on, when, under the persuasion of certain officials, I consented to spend some time in prison. The distinguished idiot, who occupied the chief official position in the place, said it was

A DAMASCUS GIRL.

quite evident that I had come into Turkey disguised as an Arab in order to find out something. The people of Damascus had apparently no delusions upon that score and took me for nothing but what I was, a thin-skinned Westerner who suffered so much from the cold that he was willing to put on any sort of blanket that would keep out the bitter wind. They usually laughed as I passed them, and I don't blame them. However, one met more scowls than laughter in Damascus, and it was very palpable that they do not look with favour upon intruders. There is, moreover, for the Western visitor a certain vague feeling of danger and mystery as he treads the tortuous maze of those narrow streets. It is not so many years ago that Damascus rose against its Christian population and massacred more than six thousand of them, burning their quarter to the ground and ruining, for the time at least, the trade of the city, which was largely in Christian hands. It seems to a stranger that a recurrence of this disaster might at any moment become possible. Still this sense of apprehension may be due entirely to imagination or to a lack of knowledge of the language. When we were driving in a carriage

through one of the narrowest lanes of Damascus we nearly ran over a fierce-looking Arab who sprang into a doorway to save himself. His eyes glared, he shook his fist, and vehemently screamed out a torrent of language that from its sound I judged to consist chiefly of the most terrible imprecations. The driver appeared to strike at him with his whip and I fully expected that the answer would be a shot, but as the dragoman, who understood the lingo, seemed in no way moved by the occurrence, I asked him what the man had said.

"Oh," he answered, "the Arab is merely telling the driver that a lot of boys are hanging on behind the carriage and he asked him to give them a cut with the whip, which the driver has done."

This was a most simple explanation of what seemed to my untutored ears the beginning of a tragedy, and it shows how an ignorant stranger may misapprehend what is passing around about him. All in all, that carriage drive was rather an unpleasant experience. The streets were scarcely wider than the carriage itself and were always crowded with foot-passengers, yet the driver paid not the slightest attention to the

comfort or safety of any one, but whipped up his horses and drove like a chariot of destruction among the crowd, making all ahead of us scatter as best they could into doorways or up on the counters of bazaars. No one hurled stones at us, as they certainly would have been quite justified in doing, neither did they make any protest; it was all taken as a natural thing that the man who had a carriage would ride down the foot-passenger if he could. It was quite useless to get the dragoman to expostulate with the driver. The latter shrugged his shoulders, amazed that we cared anything about the fate of the unfortunate foot-passengers. "Let them get out of the way," he said, which was a difficult thing to do unless they had a balloon each; or wings.

A young author told me once that although he loathed politics, he was in the habit of joining political campaigns at election times, and canvassed for the candidate in order that he might have an excuse for entering strange houses. He liked to see the interior of other peoples' houses and learn how his fellows lived. Damascus would be the spot for that young man. The showing of the interiors of houses is one of the

stock industries of the place. There is a house in a narrow street at Beyrout which is a dream of architectural beauty inside, but which looks like a factory as far as the exterior is concerned. In Damascus there is always a dramatic contrast between the inside and the outside of a house. The blank mud walls of the exterior, broken only by a stout door, give no indication of what may be seen once that door has admitted the stranger. The door usually gives access to an open court in which various shrubs grow, sometimes a palm, an orange, or a fig tree, or perhaps lemon, all of which semi-tropical plants make you wonder how they get along on some of these extremely cold days which Damascus experiences in winter, standing as it does several thousand feet above the sea-level. Possibly the reason may be that the sun is always strong and the walls save those tender plants from the biting winds. There is a passage from the outside courts to a square in the interior, the centre of which is open to the sky, while around it are the rooms and covered verandas which look upon the flowing fountain in the middle. The pavement is usually of marble, sometimes pure white, sometimes

STREET SCENE, DAMASCUS.

black and white, and sometimes a varicoloured mosaic. The slender Moorish pillars that support the roof are also of marble with marvellously carved arches and cornices At the end of the recess where the roof covers an open space, is generally to be found a marble bench for sitting or reclining on, upholstered with luxurious rugs and soft pillows, while here and there before it stand little arabesque tables bearing tobacco and cigarettes. Glass bottles with coils of tubing and amber mouthpieces are indication that here facing the fountain is the smoking-room of the house. In most of the enclosed rooms the marble floors are at two levels, the proprietor and his family occupying the upper level and his servants the lower. In most of the houses we saw, the owner had once been rich and was now come down in the world, which is easy to do in Damascus. From one a tremendous contribution had been exacted to help carry on the Greek war, another had made disastrous railway speculations, and so on. In some cases the splendid marble-floored rooms with their prettily frescoed walls and ceilings and cornices, were used as storehouses for grain, the house itself contributing to the rev-

enue of its owner through the fees demanded for the showing of it.

The most striking and lovely sight, however, about Damascus is the view of the city itself from the hilltop to the northwest, which the eye can observe without the coöperation of the nose being called into requisition — always an advantage in the East. It is here that Mahomet is said to have stood with only a few followers at his back, declaring that he would not enter the city, as Allah intended that man should have but one paradise, and his was to be in heaven. It is added that when Mahomet had a hundred thousand men at his back he had no such compunction but forthwith entered. This, however, can hardly be true, as the Moslems took Damascus in the year 634, two years after Mahomet had died. Nevertheless, Damascus is a holy city of the Moslems, for here lie buried three of Mahomet's wives and his most celebrated daughter, whose grave, by the way, is also shown at Medina. And from Damascus every year starts the pilgrim caravan for Mecca, accompanying the dromedary that has over its back the green canopy containing the new covering sent annually by the Sultan, to be

TOMB OF MAHOMET'S FAMILY, DAMASCUS.

hung up in the great mosque at Mecca. This important procession is escorted by all the civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of the place, accompanied by an imposing military display.

The ancient city, as viewed from this height of five hundred feet above it, presents a most entrancing spectacle. It is like a great white spheroid of pearl surrounded by a vivid setting of emerald. The two rivers that flow into Damascus from the mountains, and lose themselves shortly after in the arid desert, are the cause of this oasis of luxurious vegetation which seems so affectionately to embrace the white city with its cloud-like canopies of domes and numerous sky-piercing minarets. No wonder the indignant Naaman said to the prophet, when commanded to bathe in the Jordan: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" For thus it must seem to all the citizens of Damascus. No matter how often the city was taken and destroyed, and it has been captured more frequently than any other habitation on earth, it was always rebuilt because of its rivers. Ancient leases were given in England for as long as grass grows and water runs, and in like

manner Damascus holds its lease of life. No Westerner ever appreciates water until he has paid a visit to the arid East.

About a mile to the west of Damascus, at the foot of the mountains, is the gorge from which the River Abana issues to the plain, and here is situated a café and some gardens where a man may spend a happy day. Between this gorge and the city is a broad parade-ground where troops are exercised, and where in the evening the young bloods of the city who possess Arabian horses come out to play an equestrian game somewhat like polo, but lacking the ball. There about sunset, while the bugles were blowing in the huge surrounding barracks, and the Turkish troops were singing "God save the Sultan" as they are compelled to do every evening, we stood and watched the antics of the horsemen. Each man had a long stick which he flourished like a spear, selecting some other galloping horseman and hurling the stick lancewise at him. Part of the game seemed to be the recovering of the stick without dismounting, which was a somewhat difficult thing to do. The horses were all most gorgeous in their trappings, and they raced at break-

neck speed over the not too level plain, guided apparently by the touch of the heel. We stood there long in the humane hope that some one would come a cropper, but they all seemed to miss disaster by the most narrow of shaves.

CHAPTER IX.

Our Dragoman — The Damascus Railway — Trouble with the Governor — A Trip to Tripoli — High Jinks on Landing — The Very Worst Hotel in the World.

MUCH of the comfort and pleasure derived from a visit to a land of an unknown tongue is due to a competent interpreter. Most of us who live in America or England have our knowledge of Arabic limited to the justly celebrated notation of that name, therefore my comrade and myself considered ourselves fortunate in having with us a genial young Maronite named Selim G. Tabet, who spoke fluently Arabic, English, Turkish, Greek, and other useful languages. He was an indefatigable young man, infinitely obliging, and, what is rarer in these parts, scrupulously honest. He had been recommended to us by the agent to the Prince line in Beyrout, and the only flaw I could possibly pick in the character of Selim

SELIM G. TABET, DRAGOMAN.

was his pathetic and almost cringing fear of the Turkish official. However, it is all but impossible for a man who has breathed the free air of America and England to appreciate accurately the situation of a civilised person under Turkish dominion. On several occasions we were stopped by some person in authority, and Selim was questioned shrewdly as to our object in visiting that particular section of the country. On these occasions he came as near to trembling as any man can, as he breathlessly asked us to produce our documents and satisfy the questioner. As a rule the official would examine our papers minutely, and, handing them back with a glance of unsatisfied suspicion, would walk away with an abruptness that could hardly be termed polite. Then all the young Maronite's valour returned to him and he would tell us courageously what stern decisive action might have been expected on his part had the official proved obstreperous.

We went back over the Lebanon railroad in the daylight so that we might enjoy the scenery. At Muallakah, on the top, an hour or so is allowed for luncheon. Having had a corner seat all the way from Damascus and desiring to

retain it, I left upon it my Arabian overcoat and my handbag. On returning from lunch I found a gigantic Turk had calmly moved my impedimenta, and was occupying my place. I went over to the dragoman, who was standing on another part of the platform conversing with his friend the landlord of the inn, and said to him:

"There is a man in my seat, and I wish you would tell him to get out." Selim replied that this was an unheard-of outrage, and came heroically forward, but the moment he saw who sat in the seat, he wilted, turned pale, and drew me aside.

"That is the governor of the next district," he said. "I will find you a seat in another carriage."

"No, you won't; that's my seat and I want it."

"But he's the governor."

"He may be twenty governors for all I care, but I am governor of that portion of the train. I have paid for it, occupied it, and am going to have it."

"Let me get you another seat, sir," implored Selim; "the governor is only going for a short

distance, and then you can return to that carriage."

"The corner seats are all occupied," I replied, "and I want a corner seat. I don't go over the mountains of Lebanon every day and am not going to be cheated out of my place."

"I will turn somebody out and get you a corner seat somewhere else," insisted the dragoman.

"No, let us have even-handed justice; that would merely be piling tyranny on tyranny. I want my own seat, and my own seat I intend to have. Now are you going to speak to this man or shall I be compelled to do it myself?" Selim's knees began to knock together and his lips turned blue as he beseeched me to be satisfied with a place elsewhere. Seeing his distress, I left him, went into the carriage, picked up my bag and coat, and spoke to the governor with all the politeness which my words imply:

"Here, old man, you're in my place, and you must get out. I want that seat." The governor looked up at me bewildered, not understanding what had been said. But one of his entourage, frowning heavily, said in passable English:

"This is the honourable governor of the next district."

"So I have been told," I answered; "therefore translate to him what I say, which is to the effect that he has removed my belongings without my permission, and is occupying my seat, for which I have paid and in which I propose to sit from Damascus to Beyrout."

"What does he say?" the governor appeared to ask of his comrade. The other seemed to translate into Arabic my statement. The governor instantly rose, vacated the seat, and bowed with a courtesy that made me ashamed of myself. His companion then said that the governor tendered me a thousand apologies, as when he removed the coat he thought it belonged to some Arab. I returned to the official thanks for his complaisance, and begged the interpreter to assure him that my only reason for desiring a seat in the corner was that I was a stranger in Syria, that the country through which we were travelling was most grand and imposing, and I was deeply desirous of seeing it, but that, nevertheless, I should be happy if the governor consented still to occupy the place. This he most generously refused to do, saying

he was delighted at the compliment paid to his country and overjoyed that I condescended to admire it. Thus the international episode ended, and before the governor left the train we were the greatest of friends, and I had a cordial invitation to visit him. He deeply regretted his inability to speak English, and I mourned the fact that my early defective education had not included Turkish.

Arriving at Beyrout we found ourselves undecided whether to go south to Sidon or north to Tripoli. I preferred to go south, but my companion thought we had better take to the north.

"You see," I said to him, "we can work up through Sidon and Tyre to the Bay of Akka and then strike inland to Tiberias, finally reaching El Kuds, which is a town I want very much to visit."

"What is there to see there?" he asked.

"Oh, I think it is by all odds the most interesting place in Palestine."

"I never heard of it," replied my friend.

"Oh, yes, you did," I assured him, "although it was probably under the name of Jerusalem. Thus you see what it is to hold converse in the

train with a Turkish pasha. He told me El Kuds was the proper name for Jerusalem, and I am merely working off my knowledge on you."

By going south we would pass through Tyre and Sidon and Acre, from thence crossing to Lake Tiberias, and along the Jordan to Jerusalem, after which we could make our way to Jaffa and join our steamer there. My friend, however, was tired of the accommodation afforded us throughout Syria, and yearned for the fleshpots of the *Creole Prince*, which I have to admit held a great attraction for myself.

A wretched little steamer, called the *Prince George*, which the Turks had probably captured from the Greeks, was our only conveyance to the south, while as far as the north was concerned there waited for us a magnificent Clyde-built steamer of the Egyptian line, and by going to Tripoli we could come next day upon the *Creole Prince*, which was cruising up and down the coast of Syria in a most delightful fashion. Not knowing what to do, we tossed up for it, and the north won. Accordingly, we made our way to the steamer, and took passage for Tripoli. The afternoon was

SIDON.

charming, the Mediterranean like a sea of glass, the Khedival steamer luxurious, and so we enjoyed our fine sea-promenade along the rugged picturesque Syrian coast with its high chain of mountains to the east. The Arabs and Turks, even those who have a good deal of money to spare, rarely spend it for first-class accommodation on these steamers, and yet they travel in great comfort. They take mattresses with them and an ample supply of blankets and that sort of thing. These, when the weather is fine, they spread out on deck, collect their family about them on the springy oases, some wrapping themselves up in their cloaks and going soundly to sleep, others lighting their hubble-bubbles and smoking luxuriously, sitting cross-legged on the mattress, thus economising room.

As the evening drew on the open spaces of the deck were occupied by Mohammedans at their interesting and gymnastic prayers. The preparatory ablutions on shipboard are of the slightest, merely consisting of pouring some water from a tin can on the hands and bare feet. Then they spread their rugs on deck so that they may bow toward Mecca, standing, kneeling, and prostrating themselves upon them,

always facing the ancient capital of Mohammedanism. So strict are they that if the ship veers around, as often happens, the prayer-rug has to be shifted several times during the devotions. Every good Moslem prays five times a day, and four times in each session of devotion he repeats what may be called the Lord's Prayer of Mohammedanism, considered by scholars to be the gem of the Koran, and which runs as follows: "In the name of God the compassionate compassioner. Praise be to God, the Lord of the worlds, the compassionate compassioner, the Sovereign of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship, and of Thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way, in the way of those to whom Thou hast been gracious; on whom there is no wrath, and who go not astray."

Coming to anchor opposite Tripoli, there ensued a scene of the wildest confusion I have ever beheld, contrasting strangely with the orderly landing which takes place from a European steamer. As soon as we came to rest it was evident that the Yale and Harvard boat-race was making toward us, only there was a great deal more splashing in the rowing, and,

perhaps, more bad language used between the competitors than is ever heard during that classic contest. These great rowing-boats came pell-mell, all in a huddle, up to our gangway. There were between ten and twenty large-sized craft, and it seemed as if a free fight was going on at the bottom of the ship's ladder. All the chief rowers of the boats stormed, and fought, and squabbled, while other athletic individuals came tearing up the sloping stairs outside. These energetic and rampageous watermen charged in among the crowd that waited around the top of the gangway, and we experienced all the excitement of being boarded by an enemy. One pirate snatched my handbag from me and flung it airily over the side of the vessel, another grasped my overcoat and sent that fluttering through space, each shouting to the scoundrel below to secure the articles while the victim was being attended to on deck. It was a great blessing that the boats were so numerous and packed so tightly together, for thus nothing flung overboard could fall into the water. Each pirate claimed that this robbery of my belongings gave him a mortgage on me, and together they dragged me down the stair-

way. Then ensued an interesting struggle, of which I was a helpless sufferer, each vociferating in deplorable Arabic expletives that he was to have the final right of carrying me to Tripoli. I went in one boat, my valise in another, my overcoat in a third, and all three desperadoes united when we landed in claiming due recompense. But the trouble actually began when I was thrown into the stern of a boat and held down by a minion thereof, so that I could not escape. Everybody was tossing their bedding and baskets and water-cans and lunch-baskets over the side, trusting to Providence that they would land in some boat. I thought for awhile I was going to share the fate of Desdemona as the mattresses and blankets came raining down upon me. When the boat-race restarted again for the shore, the rowers pulling like madmen and cursing each other, I had time to look around and see that my companion, who was crushed in between a couple of Arabs in another boat, looked very much the worse for wear. I hailed him and bade him be of good cheer. He replied dolefully that he had lost all his belongings, and I comforted him by telling him I was in the same fix. We now missed the genial

SELIM G. TABET, IN NATIVE COSTUME.

Selim G. Tabet, for no one could speak a word of our language, and we seemed to be in the hands of the most turbulent populace that lived on all the borders of the Mediterranean. Landing by the side of a tall pier, the boatmen hauled us up on the deck of it, by the collar, as if there wasn't a moment to spare and we were bales of perishable goods for immediate delivery. Our clothes were torn, and when my companion was hove up alongside of me we were two forlorn, ragamuffinly-looking individuals. All the other passengers, being accustomed to this sort of usage, sauntered on their way down the pier, but we two remained at the end of it, surrounded by no less than six boatmen, each of whom demanded immense, but unintelligible sums of money which they represented by spreading the fingers of one hand aloft, and shaking the other fist at us. The man who had taken on my valise demanded his pay, the boatman who had actually transported me demanded his pay, and the fellow who seemed to be declaring that he had run great dangers in protecting my overcoat also demanded cash before he would give up my garment. In the same manner three others surrounded my friend.

"What are we to do?" he said, in despair. "Why didn't we bring Selim along to protect us?"

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied, "but if there is no one in this place who can speak English, I expect we'll have to camp out on the end of the pier for the night."

Finally there came along slowly toward us a dignified Turkish official who spoke French.

"What is the trouble?" he asked.

"No trouble at all," I answered, "except that I want a permit from the Turkish Government to kill at least five of these ruffians. We were going on to Alexandretta, when these villains came aboard, took our things, and bundled us into the boats. There isn't another steamer for a week, and so we want to know to whom we must look for our expenses and due recompense for this outrage."

"Oh," said the Turk, "that was a most serious thing to do. Do you mean to say they have hauled you ashore here against your will?"

"Certainly," I replied, unblushingly; "we were under the Sultan's protection on an

Egyptian steamer, and I am sure his officers will not allow us to be kidnapped in this manner in spite of our protests."

An instant silence had fallen upon the six pirates on the advent of the officer. They awaited with some anxiety the result of our conference, looking from one to the other of us. The Turkish official uttered a few quiet words very solemnly, which evidently explained to them that they had kidnapped two Alexandretta passengers in their zeal. The effect on his listeners was instantaneous. They dropped our property on the deck of the pier before he had completed the sentence, turned, and ran like deer. They were a set of villains with bare, brown legs, and the pace they accomplished in their flight I have never seen equalled. As there seemed to be some chance that they might be stopped by an officer at the shore end of the pier, some of them leaped into the shallow water, and thus splashed to land; others, however, got through the gate without being arrested, and a moment later all six had disappeared into the town. They evidently determined to put a Limited Liability Act as speedily as possible between themselves and the consequences of

their alleged assault. The officer turned to us with a smile.

"It is all right," I assured him, "and now, if you will tell us how much we honestly owe the men who brought us ashore, we will pay it cheerfully."

The officer replied that twenty-five cents each to our actual transporters would be ample, and this we ultimately paid when fear had subsided in the bosoms of our kidnappers, and they came to our hotel later, whining for their money.

There seemed to be but one hotel in the important town of Tripoli-by-the-Shore, and this was a large square building rising from the edge of the water, and bearing on its side the pretentious announcement, "Grand Hotel of Europe and Asia," or words to that effect. We found it landlorded by a corpulent Greek, and, without wishing to compliment his tavern at all, I may say it was the vilest hole we ever got into either in Europe, Asia, or Africa, or any other continent. The Arabs and Turks who were our fellow lodgers were not nearly in such bad plight as we were, because they brought their bedding with them, and took empty rooms, which they thus furnished for the night. The hotel

had a lovely situation, and if it had been rightly kept, might have been a delightful place to stay in. A balcony extended along the whole front of the upper story, and here, not knowing the food and lodging that awaited us, we brought out our chairs and sat congratulating ourselves on the fine view of the Mediterranean and the outlying islands it possessed. We had to exercise some care on this balcony, for the boards were broken and rotten, and the wonder is we did not drop through to the street below. The fat landlord knew only two phrases of the English language. One was "Not good?" and the other was "All right." I don't suppose the man has washed himself since the Acropolis was built. We had several courses for dinner, each one, if possible, worse than what had gone before, and all practically uneatable. The landlord himself was our waiter, and when he flung down the food on the board he would ejaculate in an interrogative tone of voice, "Not good?" and when we shook our heads, he cheerfully replied, with satisfaction, in an affirmative inflection, "Not good! All right." And so he left us.

CHAPTER X.

On the Track of Beer — An Anxious Search for a Drink — A Friendly Stranger — A Personally Conducted Tour around Tripoli — Embarrassing Politeness — An Old Castle as a Jail.

IT was too late that night to explore Tripoli, so, being tired, we betook ourselves to bedrooms that were veritable chambers of horror, such as Madame Tussaud never dreamt of. Next day, breakfast was brought to us consisting of eggs, bread and butter, and little thimble cups of Turkish coffee. The butter not being fit for axle-grease, we left it alone, and the bread was unspeakable and revolting. I rummaged around the place hoping to find something either eatable or drinkable, and came upon an empty beer bottle which had on it the brand of a well-known firm in Munich. Beneath the magic title "Munich" appeared an unpronounceable name and address in Tripoli. That there should be prime bottles of Munich beer

in this outlandish thirsty place, seemed too good news to be true. Taking the bottle with me I sought the landlord, who was plucking a lean pigeon on the flat roof of his house, a handy place, because the feathers then would fly all over the town without further trouble to him.

"Have you got any more bottles of this brand?" I inquired.

"Not good?" he asked.

"Very good indeed if you have got any more of it," I replied.

"Not good; all right," and he went on with his plucking. No further information was it possible to get out of him, so I took the label off the bottle, and, with my friend, started on a pilgrimage for beer. It was soon evident that the liquor merchant did not reside in the port town. The real city of Tripoli is about two miles inland, and is connected by a weird tramway line with the harbour. We mounted to the top of the vehicle that was waiting, and jingled up to the inland town, passing along the side of a road that was bordered by luxuriant orange groves; in fact, the plain of Tripoli seems to be fertile beyond expression. Every

tree was a dense mass of foliage, and the golden fruit was hanging down its back. We met caravans of camels trudging down to the port like a circus procession.

Our thirst, which had not been quenched for days and days, increased as we continued our search for the beer bottles. "He who drinks beer, thinks beer," says the proverb, but he who has a desert thirst in his throat, and knows there is good beer in the neighbourhood, if he can only find it, thinks beer more earnestly than the other fellow. At last, on the narrow main street of the real Tripoli, we came upon the beer merchant; and his walls, lined with bins of real brown bottled Munich, were, by all odds, the most picturesque sight we had seen in the East. The merchant was conversing with a man who seemed to be an officer of some kind, and this gentleman kindly translated to the merchant our yearning desire for beer. The merchant, however, appeared to have no desire for custom, and slowly shook his head, enunciating something in Arabic.

"He says," the interpreter told us, "that he sells only at wholesale; if you want beer to drink you must go to the hotel, and there order it."

TRIPOLI.

"But," I protested, "we have just come from the hotel, and could find no beer. The proprietor says he has no more Munich, and that is why we came here."

"Which hotel are you staying at?"

"Good heavens! you don't mean to say there is another! I wish we had known that. It cannot be worse than the one we have left."

"There is a very good hotel indeed up the street, about five minutes' walk from here. I will show you the way, and then you can get your beer."

This obliging individual accompanied us up the street. Narrow as this thoroughfare was, the hotel projected half-way across it. It seemed to be much cleaner than the one we had left, and we now regretted we had not known of this hostelry. Pouring water is everywhere audible and visible in Tripoli, a pleasant fact which gives the place a unique distinction among Eastern cities. It bubbles up in great marble basins, and seems to be illimitable in quantity, allowed to run waste with a lavishness which is rare on that coast. Our guide took us to a corner room and seated us at a window looking down the narrow street,

where a row of kneeling camels were being laden with boxes and bales. The proprietor of the hotel came to us wiping his hands on an apron. As his hotel was much cleaner than the other, so he seemed to have washed later in the Christian era than our fat host down at the coast. The beer-yearning condition of our throats was explained to him and he departed, being beseeched not to lose any unnecessary time. A few moments later we saw him hurrying down the street toward the beer-merchant's premises, and finally he reappeared up the street with a bottle by the neck in each hand. As I remember, these bottles cost us about a dollar each, but they were worth their weight in gold. We offered our guide a bottle, but he declined, saying he never drank beer. He sat there smiling and polite, and as we had already tendered to him our most effusive thanks, and bade him farewell three or four times without his showing any inclination to go, we began to wonder what we were to do with him. He didn't look like the man to whom we could offer money, and already we had expressed our obligation to him as far as words were concerned. Finally, when the beer was consumed,

we paid our bill, rose, and shook hands with him once more. He rose also, returned our greeting most cordially, and accompanied us down to the street. Here we reiterated our gratitude, lifted our hats in farewell salutation, and turned to depart, but he stood by us.

"You are going to see Tripoli, perhaps?" he said. I replied that such was the intention.

"It is the most beautiful town in the world," he alleged, enthusiastically; and on my admitting that this fact had hitherto been concealed from me, he launched out in praise of its picturesque situation, the amplitude of unfailing flowing water, adding that it had more soap factories than any town of its size on earth. I inquired what they did with the soap, and he informed me it was used for washing.

"Not in Tripoli," I ventured. "The demand must come from the outside." He admitted this was the case, but added that Tripoli had more Turkish baths than any place of its size in Syria. This was stupefying intelligence, for although you may export soap, the inhabitants of a town must support their own Turkish baths. He turned us down a narrower street than the one we were in, and stopped at a place covered

with a large dome. We entered a large room filled with greenish light, and found ourselves under the big dome. The floor was of marble, and a circular marble tank, over whose rounded edge water was flowing, occupied the centre of the apartment.

"What's this?" I asked; "a mosque?"

"No, a Turkish bath."

Attendants most meagrely attired, with long Turkish towels over their shoulders, their bare feet in clattering wooden sandals, flitted about the dimly lighted room. The illumination of the dome was attended to in a most unique manner. When the rounded cupola had been built of stone and cement, bottles were placed mouth upwards in the mortar. There were some hundreds of all sizes and shapes: beer bottles, whiskey bottles, coloured bottles, and clear glass bottles. The arched roof was still rain-proof, and what light there was, filtered through the bottoms of these bottles.

Once outside in the narrow street, we again shook hands with our comrade, who again warmly returned the hand-pressure, and again walked contentedly along by our side. He said it was a delight to show his beautiful city to appreci-

ative strangers. My friend and myself, speaking English, which this man did not understand, consulted as to what we were to do. We didn't want to insult him by offering him a tip, and yet if he hung like this to us, and really desired a tip, we certainly wished to give it to him, for he evidently knew the place thoroughly, and was an excellent and intelligent guide. But his costume and his manners made it impossible that he should be a professional cicerone. We wandered through the maze of bazaars, finding them, after those of Damascus, the most interesting we had seen. He took us down into a lower part of the city, where the thoroughfares were only wide enough for two people to walk abreast; then under a dark archway, and out on to a bridge which spanned a rapid river, whose clear water babbled musically through the centre of the city on its way to the sea. On each side of the stream houses sprang right from the edge of the water, with numerous balconies hanging over the swift current. It was a charming sight, with something suggestive of Venice about it. After admiring the view and praising it as it deserved, which eulogy seemed to give great pleasure to our guide, I, in

desperation, offered him two silver mejedehs, which amounted to a little over a dollar and a half. He waved these coins gracefully aside, smiling benignly.

"If you will come with me now," he said, "I shall take you to the prison."

This seemed, all in all, the right sort of punishment for the glaring insult I had been guilty of in offering money to one who was evidently a gentleman. We followed him up a steep hill to a great stone castle overhanging the precipitous cliff that borders the rapid river. From the western front of this castle there was an amazing view of the minarets, domes, and spires of the city, for about half of the population of Tripoli are Christians, and twenty or thirty church spires contend with the minaret. Beyond was the vivid green of the orange groves terminating at the shores of the bay. Then in the distance the seaside town, and to the horizon the unbroken blue of the Mediterranean. The guide was as pleased with our outspoken admiration of the prospect as if he himself was the owner of the whole landscape. With enthusiastic joy he pointed out, in the grim wall of the castle, a round iron cannon-ball which, he said,

had been fired years ago, by the British fleet; and if that was the case, the shooting was remarkably excellent. I don't know how far out the ship stood, but the projectile had to cover something like two miles of land before it came to rest in the walls of the citadel. This castle is said to have been built by the Crusaders, who held Tripoli for five years. And certainly it is as gloomy and mediæval looking a structure as could well be imagined. Passing up an ascending crooked tunnel, we were admitted, after some parley, by the opening of massive but dilapidated oaken iron-bolted gates. Here was an amazing open courtyard, bordered by every possible style of building. In some structures, that were simply great iron cages, similar to, but larger than, those at the Zoo in which tigers are confined, crouched unfortunate wretches who were, our guide informed us, mostly Armenians, probably there for the crime of allowing the Turk to massacre their relatives. In some instances outsiders had bribed their way through the massive gates, and now squatting in front of a cage, held converse with its inmate, a Turkish soldier standing by, so that no treason might be talked.

As we stood in the centre of the square, several cages were opened, and their inmates came crouching toward us, kneeling down at our feet and endeavouring to kiss our hands. I asked our guide what this loathsome abasement meant, and he said they were begging for money, which they would give to their guards, and so purchase certain immunities. We bestowed money upon them, which the guards at once appropriated and drove the wretches back cringing into their cages. On the eastern side of this immense prison there is practically no wall, and one can stand at the edge, and look down the dizzy precipice formed by the side of the prison and the rocky cliff beneath, to the edge of the river. Away below, an industrious donkey and a revolving wheel continually pump up water for the use of the garrison and prisoners. We were glad to get out of this abode of misery and descend once more to the city. Our bewildering self-appointed guide took us through a maze of streets, and at last along a little alley into a private house. Leading us up one flight of stairs to a large, bright, and exceedingly clean room, around the walls of which ran a couch, he announced that

TURKISH WOMEN.

this was his house and bade us be seated. Then he produced a basket full of photographs which seemed to include all his relatives scattered over Syria and elsewhere, and for a time we gazed on these, afraid to make any comment, and not knowing exactly what to do in the circumstances. Presently an old lady and a young girl of about twenty, who was charmingly pretty, came in and were introduced to us as the mother and sister of our host. This meeting gave us the knowledge that, whoever our guide might be, he was no Mohammedan, for in a Moslem household it is a breach of etiquette even to inquire after the health of your host's family. A servant brought in a plate of sweets such as we had never seen or tasted before, and which we took with some dismay. There were also handed to us saucers of a reddish gelatinous substance, exceedingly sugary, which was eaten with a spoon. But however questionably adapted for Western palates the sweets were, there was no doubt whatever about the tea. The young lady herself made it in an adjoining room, and we could see her, through the doorway, busied with a Russian samovar. I shall always regret that I had not the courage to go into the next

room and learn how that tea was made, for it was by all odds the best I have ever tasted. It was served in thinnish glasses, each supported by a filigree receptacle of crusted silver with a handle to it. A bit of fresh lemon, apparently just brought in from the garden by the servant, was in every glass, and the fluid was of a rich straw colour, possessing an aroma and quality that were delicious. Never before or since have I had tea to compare with it. Our guide, who always exhibited a childlike delight in anything that pleased us, said the tea had come on camels' backs overland from China to Tripoli, and that it was made in Chino-Russian fashion. I began to fear that we were never going to be allowed to leave Tripoli, but at last said to him we were every moment expecting a large steamer, and we, being afraid to miss it, begged to take our leave. He replied cordially that there was no need of hurrying; that the bay could be seen from the top of the house, and he would at once reconnoitre and find out if the steamer were in sight. On returning, he reported that the waters of the Mediterranean were absolutely steamerless, and that it must be hours before a craft of any kind

came into the port. As I saw with apprehension that orders had been given for the preparing of a meal, I resolved to break away if I had to run for it. So making the excuses that suggested themselves on the spur of the moment, we passed down the stairs, out into the court, and from thence into the street. In the hasty consultation that ensued between my partner and myself, he suggested that we should offer gold to the man and not silver. Just as we came to this decision our guide was by our side, smiling as usual. I thanked him for the care he had taken of us, and for his hospitality, and said that as we had no way of returning it unless he condescended to accept a token of our esteem in the shape of the gold coinage of the empire, he would earn our undying gratitude by thus removing the obligation from our shoulders — in part, at least. Thereupon he took the gold coins I proffered, and so our acquaintance with him ended. What his position was in Tripoli, his name, or his occupation, I haven't the slightest idea, but through his agency we certainly saw the town as thoroughly as any two foreigners since the Crusades.

That evening the welcome hulk of the *Creole*

Prince appeared in the bay, and glad indeed we were to find ourselves once more aboard. The excellence of the fare, the cleanliness of the lodging, the delight of the smoking-room, the comfort of the big saloon were probably never so thoroughly appreciated by any two returning prodigals before. We swore we would never leave the ship again, but cruise with her up and down the Syrian coast as was her delightful habit. In this resolve, however, we reckoned without the Turk, as we were very shortly to discover.

END OF VOL. I.

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